WHAT IS ART ?

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Michele Giambono

St. Michael (detail), Venice Academy

WHAT IS ART?

STUDIES IN THE TECHNIQUE AND CRITICISM OF PAINTING

BY

JOHN C. VAN DYKE

AUTHOR OF "ART FOR ART'S SAKE," "THE MEANING OF PICTURES," "STUDIES IN PICTURES," ETC.

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TO

BRANDER MATTHEWS

PREFACE

For twenty years there has been discussion of art from the point of view of the connoisseur, the collector, the museum director. It seems we are in some danger of forgetting that there is another point of view—that of the artist, the producer. We have become so interested in art as a commodity, or a curiosity, that we have possibly overlooked the fact that art may be regarded merely as art, or even as something of use and purpose. We are in further danger of forgetting that art in a state must come out of the state and represent its time and its people, and that foreign importations or methods or motives will not answer as a substitute. The gathering of art-plunder from all quarters of the globe may eventually make us a nation of experts, but never a nation of artists, nor an artistic people. Still further are we in danger of forgetting that name and price and pedigree have nothing whatever to do

with excellence or its absence in a work of art. The canvas that will not stand without a signature, a hall-mark, or a dollar-mark cannot stand long by virtue of them.

These thoughts, with chapters on the constitution, the production, and the appreciation of painting, make up the pages of this little book. They may interest people who care to read about such subjects, possibly because they are thoughts that often dissent from those usually expressed. I have no wish, however, to make a virtue of this negation. It seems rather a necessity that some one should occasionally state the other side of the case. Nor have I any notion of claiming an added grace in saying disagreeable things about critics and archæologists, many of whom are my personal friends. With so much folly flying about us it seems rather a necessity, again, that some one should occasionally shoot at it. Destructive criticism, however, has not been my object. Rather have I tried to build up, or at least uphold, certain established principles, and I trust the reader of these pages will recognize that there is argument here, not only for art as art, but for art as an expression of life. That and its decorative and utilitarian aim are its sole

appeals. They never should have been lost sight of for a moment. In the appreciation of art the commercial phase of it is irrelevant and wholly negligible.

J. C. V. D.

RUTGERS COLLEGE,
October, 1910.

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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS ART?

WHAT constitutes art in a book, a picture, or a marble is a question that comes up with each new generation. It has been argued out and settled scores of times, but it will not stay settled. The last group of artists to arrive possibly does something novel, something that it thinks should change definitions and boundary lines. It demands a revision that shall include its own work and possibly exclude that of its predecessors. Here, for example, is a young crop of writers, just come to glory, insisting that "literature" (which is the literary equivalent of "art") lies in the novel, the poem, or the drama, and that any form of writing that teaches or preaches, or has any practical or valuable information behind it, may be history or philosophy or science, but it is not "literature." And here is a new band of painters who will have it that the picture is a "nocturne" or a "symphony"—

something decorative in tone or color—and that anything illustrative or representative, or in any way informing, is outside the pale of art. Some of the band even arrive at the violent conclusion that when the brains are out, when the subject is reduced to a veiled shadow, when there is a wrestle with form and color to say something about nothing, then and then only is the real article of art produced.

This, to the critic who made elementary distinctions a few generations ago founded on nineteenth-century art, is not only startling but revolutionary. He had it written down that literature had something to do with substance, with morals and life, even with subject and the form in which it was cast. The great poems of the world were the long poems, the ones that required "sustained effort"—for example, the epics of Homer and Dante. Did not Byron make a bid for immortality with twenty-four cantos of "Don Juan" following Pulci and Ariosto? And did not most of his contemporaries burst into song, one volume or more long, recounting the adventures of Marmions and Thalabas and Lalla Rookhs? Length, the romantic subject, and the historical setting had much to do in those

days with what constituted poetry. A lyric by Shelley, an ode by Keats, or a few stanzas by Burns were accepted condescendingly as pretty fragments, but not to be ranked with things done in the grand style.

Something of the same critical attitude was assumed toward the drama and the novel. A tragedy was placed above a melodrama, a melodrama above a comedy, a comedy above a farce. Anything that smacked of the classic world or that dealt with the history of gods or great conquerors was supposed to be infinitely superior to contemporary incidents. The dust of half-forgotten kings was dramatic in itself. The novelists, as well as the dramatists, scored successes by framing up antiquity into three-volume stories. The historical setting of the tale with the exalted pose of the characters made the "literature." How otherwise shall we account for the vogue of the bombastic novel of Walter Scott's times and after? Everybody read it for the story—the thing said. No one at that time cared much about how it was said.

In that same day painting, too, was supposed to consist largely in the dramatic incident or the history portrayed. Did not

David in exile exhort his favorite pupil, Gros, to stop painting contemporary subjects and to search his Plutarch for a great historical theme? Did he not make Gros believe that posterity would say of him: "This man owed us a 'Death of Themistocles?'" Across the Channel were Reynolds, Hoppner, Lawrence, and their followers, worried to the end of their days trying to produce the historical picture in the "grand style" of Raphael. Romney, as an old man, removed to his large house on Hampstead Heath where, surrounded by casts from antique sculpture, he was to make a final effort at the great historical picture, is a pathetic figure. Art consisted then of a twenty-foot canvas with half a hundred figures attitudinizing for posterity, and half a page of history explanatory of their doings tacked on the frames. Raphael's "Transfiguration" and Michael Angelo's "Last Judgment"—about the worst things they ever painted—were spoken of with bated breath, and Poussin with his pantheon of make-believe gods was an acknowledged master. The classic or historic subject was the thing. As for the fine portraits of David and Ingres, they were esteemed merely as "the painting of buttons

and cocked hats"—to quote David—the perfunctory drudgery done in the studio to keep the wolf from the door. No one talked then about Raphael's "Julius II" or his "Leo X." The "School of Athens" and the "Heliodorus" exemplified the grand style and drew the crowd their way.

Now behold a new point of view and the other end of the seesaw. The bothersome younger set, disturbing the conclusions of its predecessors, insists that the historical or romantic setting is great rubbish, that the grand style is theatrical and untrue, that length or breadth or size has nothing to do with the case. It still believes that literature is found only in the novel, the poem, and the drama, and it has a hazy idea that great painting requires a more elastic field for the imagination than the portrait offers; but it talks much about "character drawing" in the novel and the characteristic and the significant in the picture, as though the subject were somehow still a fetching feature. Its position is quite opposed to the classic or romantic tradition, but is it nearer the truth? It is quite sure that it is right—like all the generations before it—but is one end of the seesaw nearer a balance

than the other end? There is evidently room for some difference of opinion here; and perhaps also an opportunity for making elementary distinctions on our own account.

In the first place art, strictly speaking, whether in the book, the picture, the marble, or the coin, is not the thing said but rather the manner of its saying. That which is said may be history or mythology or pathos or patriotism; it may be a plot or a passion, a sensation or a sentiment, and yet have no art about it wanting a style in its saying. Even great thoughts—the thoughts that make us think—are not art, save by the manner of their expression. Hegel and Darwin were thinkers, but their thoughts did not result in literature; and that not because science and philosophy are inimical to literary expression, but because Hegel and Darwin were not artists. Arnold wrote criticism, Hooker wrote ecclesiastical polity, Carlyle wrote history, and all of them made literature out of their themes. Why? Because they handled them in a literary manner; they themselves were literary artists, creators of literature, notwithstanding their use of other forms of expression than the novel and the poem.

Many are the poets sown by nature yet wanting the accomplishment of verse. A number of people would be disposed to place Walt Whitman with the many, or, at least, deny him high rank in literature. Would such a judgment be based upon his being a commonplace thinker? Certainly not; but because of his being a commonplace artist in language. Why is it that Poe is so emphatically written down a poet both at home and abroad? Are his poems freighted with great themes or thoughts, or are they merely artistically executed? There is the picture by Watts of "Love and Death," with its very impressive thought, allegory, moral—what you will—but it is a wretched piece of form and color, and really a failure as a work of art. In the next room to it, in the National Gallery of British Art, is the same painter's "Life's Illusions," a much earlier picture, which has no apparent thought or allegory about it, no idea that is of any importance, but it is a superb work of art, splendidly seen, planned and executed. Millet's "Angelus" and his "Man with a Hoe" have both received an undue share of public attention, one because of its pathetic story and the other because of its supposed so-

cialistic teaching; but the "Angelus" is inferior art because it is lacking in drawing, values, light, and color, while the "Man with a Hoe" is good art because the figure is convincingly drawn and well placed in its atmospheric envelope. The "Gleaners," by the same painter, is better than either of them.

Now the absence of great thought, theme, or subject in art is no more of an advantage than its presence. Whitman and Watts and Millet were not handicapped by having a "message" or an allegory or a story to tell. Great thoughts of themselves will not make art, but they will not prevent it. Nor will little thoughts or the trifling incident or the meagre subject produce it. Mr. James has somewhere in his "Partial Portraits" suggested that a lady standing by a table, with her hand resting upon it, is a sufficient incident for literature if properly seen and artistically treated. The degree of interest, he avers, will depend upon the skill of the artist. Pieter de Hooch, Jan Vermeer, Terburg, Alfred Stevens, have shown us the lady in painting more than once and with superb results. There is not a particle of doubt about her sufficiency as an incident, ay, even a subject. But again the art does not

lie in the lady, but in the skill of the painter. Many masters, both old and new, have tried to make pictures of her and failed. And many again have not confined themselves to such simple materials. The limitation is not necessary. Add another figure by the table or fireplace or lying on a couch, put in a room for a background and setting, call the two Rebecca and Ivanhoe in the castle, she at the window reporting the progress of the fight, and can any one imagine that the scene is harmed either for fiction or for painting?

Mr. Whistler would say that it was harmed, because forsooth he himself was averse to story-telling with the paint brush. But no one has ever heard Botticelli's "Spring" or Carpaccio's St. Ursula pictures or Paolo Veronese's "Venice Enthroned" criticised because their subjects handicapped them as art. In the same breath Mr. Whistler would sweep the "foolish sunset" out of art; but Turner, in his "Ulysses and Polyphemus" and also in the "Fighting Téméraire," has proved its right to a place there. Turner, no doubt, would have retorted in kind by excluding twilights on the Thames with warehouses and towers in a half light, or nocturnes with figures and buildings

in muffled mystery; but Whistler has made beautiful art out of them. Each chooses what pleases him best and each perhaps produces from it something artistic. Neither the bigness nor the littleness of the theme is of deciding importance. The art shows chiefly in the manner of treatment and emanates from the man behind the brush.

This is not to argue that it makes no difference what you say as long as you say it well, and that the only thing worth looking for in novel, poem, or painting is the technique. On the contrary, it is to make the distinction that the thought or subject may be as wide as Tintoretto's "Paradise" or as narrow as Mr. Whistler's "Falling Rocket"; but the art significance of either comes only with a style of seeing or doing. Of course, every one likes at times to imagine what great effect might be produced by a combination of the exalted theme with the master technician. Could one, for instance, set Jan Vermeer to painting "Love and Death" or Mr. James to writing "Ivanhoe," what masterpieces might result! Yes; but Vermeer would probably do the Love in blue and the Death in yellow, and his precise drawing and little dabs of paint

that look so effective on the small panel would be wholly inadequate for the larger canvas; and Mr. James would probably analyze and dissect the Rebeccas and the Ivanhoes to the point of niggling the whole group. The combination of excellences—eclecticism—has never turned out the virile quality of art in either literature or painting.

The contention has been definitely settled, in painting at least, that the story, the moral, the history, with love, faith, patriotism, or romance, are not necessary to the making of the picture. Paint the figure piece, the genre, the portrait, the landscape, the still-life—what you please—and provided you see it, feel it, handle it rightly the result will be a work of art. There is no distinction attaching to size or subject. Titian's portrait of the so-called "Duke of Norfolk" is better as art than his much-praised but labored "Assumption" at Venice; whereas, on the contrary, Botticelli's portraits are not up to his large allegory of "Spring." If you would measure the art of a canvas, first discount the theme, the scale, and all that. Diaz and Fantin-Latour could reveal the finest kind of art in a bunch of roses or pinks; the Japanese show it in the

trunk of a tree or a trailing branch against the sky.

If this contention will apply to books as to pictures, what becomes of the youthful obsession that literature is to be found only in the novel, the poem, and the drama? Is literature a quality of "the best sellers" or the best-thumbed books, and do the novels of Flaubert and Daudet put Taine and Michelet out of the literary running? Do Ibsen and Shaw who supply the stage with dramas produce more pure literature than did Cardinal Newman writing a sermon or a lecture or a defence of his life? And because we have the very enjoyable poetry of Swinburne or Stephen Phillips shall we have no more description from Pierre Loti or criticism from Brunetière? What matters it the kind of material that falls to the artist's hand? If he is an artist he can fashion it into the form of art; if he is not an artist he can do as little with one material as with another.

Is the subject then so unimportant that it does not enter into the problem? Is the thing said so absolutely divorced from the manner of saying that art is wholly in the one and not at all in the other? Hardly. They may merge

one into another. Any one might search his Plutarch and concoct a "Death of Themistocles" as he might imagine a "Cupid and Psyche," a "Cleopatra," a "Hope," or a "Spring." Again, every one is said to have the materials for a novel in his own life; and almost every one at some time in his career has written poetry containing sufficient subject and sentiment at least to make a lyric or a ballad. Why then are there not more results in painting and literature? Is it not because the necessary skill is wanting? Yet skill does not mean merely a cleverness of hand in drawing and handling, in piling up sentences, in cutting up language into poetic feet. The way of seeing is somewhat, and besides there is the mood of mind produced by contemplation of the subject. Either of them may transform the theme into something quite new and strange, lend it imagination, mystery, color, light, splendor.

Now unfortunately for the majority of us we have no artistic way of seeing things, no peculiar point of view whereby we may transform plain facts into finer fancy. Possibly that accounts for our not making novels out of the incidents of our lives, that our poems are not

poetic, and that our "Deaths of Themistocles," our "Cleopatras," and our "Hopes" are unspeakably hopeless and commonplace. Just so with that lady standing by the table or fireplace. We have seen her a thousand times, but we never saw her as in a picture-frame or thought of her as in a novel. It takes a Vermeer or a Flaubert for that. How wonderful the transformation as seen through their eyes! To Vermeer she is a marvel of color standing in a drift of light and surrounded by a blue envelope of air—a figure perhaps as innately noble and refined as a duchess and yet as lacking in consciousness as a school-girl. To Flaubert, or even to Mr. James himself, she might be an epitome of womankind, a summary of the gayety or winsomeness of the sex, a mingling of all the passions or emotions, a something coldly intellectual, flippantly fanciful, or merely a curiosity for artistic analysis. The possibilities for either the painter or the novelist would be practically unlimited. The material is there to be moulded as the artist may see or feel or desire.

Again the mood of mind means quite as much as the artistic vision. Every one has

seen the sky of evening and morning—seen it thousands of times—but how does it happen that no one ever saw it quite as Corot. Were his eyes peculiarly set in his head that he should have such a charming point of view? Not exactly. Tradition tells us that Corot never spent much time working directly from nature. Try to locate his many landscapes of "Lake Nemi" or "Ville d'Avray" and you will be disappointed. He painted them in his studio and "out of his head," as the painters say. In other words, he was painting a mood of mind. After long contemplation of morning and evening light he had come to see it in his mind's eye as a vision of loveliness—a light half real and half romantic, but highly poetic, incomparably beautiful, serenely splendid. Change from this vision of the dawn or the twilight to one of full sunlight and you have Turner's mood of mind. Change again to the dusk of evening and you have Whistler's mood of mind. In each case it was a mood, an emotion, a feeling as well as a manner of seeing and doing that found its way on canvas.

Does any one doubt that Turner's great advocate, Ruskin, wrote about pictures and

sunsets and mountains in a similar frame of mind? One can hardly say that he wrote "Modern Painters" "out of his head," for it is full of actual observation, yet as a whole neither painters nor art critics can follow it. It is five volumes of passion, emotion, feeling about art and nature. Take it under your arm to the Turner room in the National Gallery and apply it to the pictures and you will be disappointed: sit down in your quiet library and read it and you will be delighted. It is not the soberest or sanest art criticism in the world. There is too much mood and frenzy in it. But because of that very condition of mind, what a piece of literature it is! It was an entirely different mood that resulted in "Vanity Fair"; but, be it remembered, it was a mood—a mental attitude toward hypocrisy, a feeling about the emptiness of social life, a disgust, perhaps, at the frailty of human nature rather than any direct noting of the actual facts. Thackeray did the book out of his head and heart like Ruskin and Turner and Corot. It would have been worthless as literature had it been done otherwise.

It seems then that an artistic way of looking at things is vitally necessary to both painting

and literature, and also that a poetic mood of mind, a feeling—the fine frenzy which sets the poet's eye rolling—are also required for the noblest art. Is there nothing else? What about the skill of hand, to which we have referred in passing, the skill that expresses the mood or feeling and records the way of seeing? Is not that a very important factor in the work of art or literature? Again one flings back to the many poets sown by nature, yet wanting the accomplishment of verse. Every writer has about him a group of relatives and friends who keep informing him what wonderful things they have in their heads if only they knew how to write. And every one knows the painter who insists that he sees things truly, but his technique bothers him and he cannot express what he sees. How far one may reach with hardly an original idea in his head, yet with adequate means of expression at hand, is suggested by the case of Gray, the poet. He has passed into a classic because of his skilful handling of language. As Lowell puts it: "He has a perfect sense of sound, and one idea without which all the poetic outfit (*si absit prudentia*) is of little avail—that of combination and arrangement,

in short, of art." It is quite the fashion still as it has always been to depreciate the importance of technique, to put it down as the mechanical part of the book or the picture, something subsidiary to the thought; but when, where, and how in the history of any art has there been great work without it? How does it happen that the world's great writers, musicians, painters, sculptors are also the world's great craftsmen? If it is to be believed that literature consists primarily in the novel—in the subject rather than its handling—what prevents those imaginative writers Mr. Haggard and Miss Corelli from occupying seats in the literary front row? And, admitting for the sake of argument the first premise, why, even as novelists, are they outranked by Mr. Hardy and Mr. Meredith? In our own country the "best sellers" are written by people who pop up one year and perhaps pop down the next year, but the best novels are conceded to be written by people like Mr. Howells. Why and how does the criticism of the day arrive at such judgments if not by an analysis of the point of view, the mood of mind, and the workmanship shown? Mr. Howells is a great technician in literature and

no small part of his genius consists in his capacity for taking infinite pains. He labors over paragraphs and sentences, over scene and setting, over impression and its adequate expression as a Louis Seize goldsmith over the design of a snuffbox. The result is the work of art in both the novel and the box—the perfected expression in pattern which you cannot add to or take away from or change in any way without injuring the effect.

We are inclined likewise to talk much of the soulful playing of some great pianist or the fine feeling of some great singer; but when, again, are these unaccompanied by mastery of technique? The life-long practice, and the skill derived therefrom, are the essentials of adequate expression. A Jean de Reszke may have been born but a Jean de Reszke was also made. The musician of nature, however wonderful in gifts, comes into the world and on the stage only half made up. He can never arrive at art save by long years of technical training. So again while we may rightly admire the exalted subjects and the romantic poetry of Wagner's operas we should not overlook the immense skill of the trained musician —the writing of the scores and the handling of the many motives by the orchestra. Call

Wagner a genius if you will, a poet, dramatist, musician born by nature if you must; but at least it should be conceded that he was also the great musical technician of his day.

This argument may be applied with even greater force to painting and sculpture than to literature or music. The story told of Giotto and his drawing for the Pope that perfect circle on paper as a proof of his artistic ability is possibly a little fiction of Vasari's; but in the mouth of the mouthpiece of all the Italian painters, it is eloquent of the prevalent belief as to what constituted art. There was no great thinking or subject or theme there. Technical skill was the only thing demonstrated, but that was sufficient not only for Vasari but for the Pope and his councillors. Given that, they thought everything else might follow as a natural sequence. Two hundred or more years later, in the same town of Florence, Andrea del Sarto, after doing some superb frescos for the church of the Servi, received the popular designation of "Andrea senza errori"—Andrea without faults. It was his technical skill, not his thinking or his piety, that was without fault. That skill was the result of the insistence upon craftsmanship which had ruled in the teachings of

the mediæval guilds and had been handed down from master to pupil into the period of the Renaissance. It was the first and last requirement of the artist in any department that he should be a skilled workman.

What craftsmen were sent out of that land of Italy before, and through, and even after the Renaissance! To mention such names as Donatello, Verrocchio, Mantegna, Leonardo, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Correggio, Titian, Paolo Veronese is not only listing the great technicians, but suggesting the whole history of Italian art. Every one of them was a master-hand whether a master-mind or not. It was just so at the north. The Van Eycks and Memlings, the Dürers and Holbeins, the Rubenses and the Rembrandts, were skilled in form, color, and pattern to the last degree known to their time; they were every one of them "senza errori" in the Florentine sense. They would not be alive to-day were it not for their skill. For their subjects have practically faded out.

> "All passes—art alone
> Enduring lasts to us,
> The bust outlives the throne,
> The coin Tiberius."

Which is to say that the religion, the history, the throne, or Tiberius—the original cause for fashioning the coin, the marble, or the fresco —eventually passes on and passes out; but the style, the skill, the art which fashioned it endures and lives after.

So we may return to the elementary distinction from which we started out, to insist once more that the thought in books and pictures and marbles may be a thing apart, that the subject may be a matter of minor importance, and that neither of them has much artistic significance in itself but may be made significant by an artistic manner of treatment. The way in which both are seen, and the depth of emotion or feeling which they may stir in the artist, are properly a phase of the art. Quite as important as this is the technical skill in form or color with which the point of view is maintained. This latter is *par excellence* the artistic feature of either the book or the picture. Art is primarily a matter of doing, somewhat a matter of seeing and feeling, and perhaps not at all a matter of theme or thinking.

CHAPTER II

THE USE OF THE MODEL

One evening in the early eighties a group of natives in an Italian town were watching from the sidewalk a quartet of young girls playing on violins in a restaurant. Girl musicians in Italy were quite rare at that time and are not very common even now. The street audience was following their playing with deep interest; it was not for the moment conscious of itself; it was off guard, oblivious of surroundings, unaware that any one was looking at it. What profound seriousness was in the faces! What simple and restful attitudes the figures assumed! How easily but firmly the people stood upon their feet! There were men there by Mantegna and Bellini, youths by Ghirlandajo, young women by Ambrogio da Predis, and old women by Torbido. One might think the noble types of early Renaissance painting had walked out of their frames and were standing there in the street but for the costumes, the place, and the surroundings.

We sometimes assume that those Renaissance people by Donatello and Benozzo had in their faces more of what is called "character" than the people to-day, that civilization and modernism have caused degeneracy in the type, and that the Italian of our time is only a smirking semblance of his former self. Are we quite right about that? On the other hand it is sometimes argued that the old masters when they painted the dukes and warriors and clergy of the Renaissance put "character" into them with a paint brush, made them look more noble than they were in reality, idealized the type so to speak. But again is that a satisfactory explanation of Italian art or artists? It is conceivable that a modern painter, had he a sufficient visual memory, might reproduce the faces in the crowd listening to the music and get a similar quality of "character" in them to that which is found in Mantegna or Benozzo. Should he, however, pursue modern methods and say to any one of the throng on the sidewalk—man, woman, or child: "I want to paint you. Come to my studio to-morrow at ten and pose for me," what would be the result? Every one knows that the individual would appear in Sunday garb with

clean face, flattened hair, and a smile, to have his picture taken. Every scrap of unconsciousness would have vanished from him. Instead of the strong type of Donatello or the naïve type of Carpaccio or the unconscious type in the street audience, the painter would have before him the smiling Italian model, and should he paint the model as seen he would have on canvas the pretty-faced handerchief-box picture so prevalent in modern painting.

It is not probable that the masters of the Renaissance period ever suffered the tyranny of the model to any such extent as the moderns. They were not continually hampered by the material presence. That the Medici family and their friends sat for their portraits in Botticelli's "Adoration of the Magi" is unbelievable; Charles V could not have posed on a rearing horse while Titian painted him; and one might think that popes and kings were a trifle too busy with affairs of church and state to give more than one or two perfunctory sittings, even to a Raphael or a Velasquez. The painters no doubt saw their sitters when and how they could, made their memoranda in the shape of notes or sketches, and finally did the portrait largely "out of their head." Seeing

their sitters in this casual manner, oftentimes, perhaps, when they were engaged in matters of importance and were quite forgetful of themselves, it can be imagined that the unconscious, the intellectual, or the forceful in them would come to the surface and be apparent in the face and figure. It may be further imagined that this look, the index of the nobler man, would be the feature making the strongest lodgment in the painter's memory and the very one of all others that he would seek to represent upon canvas.

Those were days of keen eyes and visual memory among painters, days of doing things swiftly and surely; but it must not be inferred that there was no painting whatever from the model, no sittings given to the painter. Vasari explicitly tells us of the long sittings Leonardo required to make the portrait of Mona Lisa; how exactly and carefully it was done; and how the painter never allowed Mona Lisa to pose or become dull. The narrative goes on to say that "While Leonardo was painting her portrait, he took the precaution of keeping some one constantly near her to sing or play on instruments, or to jest and otherwise amuse her, to the end that she might

continue cheerful, and so that her face might not exhibit the melancholy expression often imparted by painters to the likenesses they take." If for "melancholy" we read "conscious" we shall have an early recognition of the danger of too close an adherence to the model. Even the great Leonardo was afraid of it. Was it this that induced him to abandon the portrait unfinished? Did he feel the artificial in the natural and finally throw down his brushes in despair or disgust? There is a feeling of the artificial in the lady even to this day, let the Paters read into her, or out of her, what they may or will.

Such a thought possibly never disturbed the Egyptian sculptors, who cut the superb portrait busts belonging to the early days of the empire. The busts were for the tomb and were likenesses of the deceased, done in all probability after death and from memory. The living man had he posed as a model might have insured more exactness in the details, but that exactness could hardly have made them more virile or more pronounced in character. Just so with the portraits on wooden panels taken from the wrappings of the mummies found in the Fayoum in 1884. They are

coarse, degenerate work done in wax after the Greek or Roman method, and beyond question done from memory; but what a live look they have! How full of weird forcefulness! One might think these were the dead come to life again with the sad seriousness of the nether world still in their faces.

But the dead are not painted in these modern times—except from a photograph. The man or his counterfeit presentment must be there or the painter is helpless. He cannot work without the model; he has not the visual memory to do the portrait "out of his head." A memory of the eye was never taught him. In the art classes, when he was a student, there was an ever-present model on the stand. He was told to look at the model for every line of light or shade, and to follow it exactly; he was forbidden to "fake" things, as they called it, or to do anything from recollection. When one uses a crutch for a bad leg or a bad memory it tides one over a present circumstance, but it does not help either the leg or the memory. They both grow flabby and unreliable. The painter who has been raised on the model is seldom wholly weaned from it. He can do nothing, not even a drapery or a back-

ground, without it. It is said that Mr. Sargent in painting a certain portrait, some years ago, needed a white marble column in his picture. Where he was painting at the time there were no marble columns, but at the suggestion of a friend he had a carpenter make a wooden one and give it a coat of white paint. This the painter set up and painted with the result that in the picture it looked, not like marble, but like a wooden column painted white. He had realized the model to the last detail of appearance. He could not get away from it. The tale as told was meant to illustrate the painter's uncompromising veracity; but does it not also illustrate a limitation?

When realistic portraiture is in the air how can anything but an official report be expected upon the canvas? The omnipresence of the facts crowds out the nobler aspect of the sitter and forbids the finer spirit of art itself. The externals only are realized. The greater the realization of these the more "jumpy" is the likeness. This usually calls for applause. After twenty sittings, perhaps, with every wrinkle recorded and every hair drawn out, the figure fairly talks or walks out of the

canvas. It is what is called "a speaking likeness." Sometimes it cannot be made by ordinary methods to speak fast enough for some of the artists who make periodic visits to America to paint our fashionable folk, and so they resort to a trick of the camera. A snap shot is taken of the sitter—of course merely as an aid at odd moments to the painter. It is enlarged and thrown upon a sensitized canvas—usually without the sitter's knowledge. Over this enlarged photograph the artist lays his colors and produces the colored photograph on canvas. The likeness is now more "wonderful" than ever. The applause is louder and longer.

But what have we from either the camera or the model-bound painter but a tale of facts? At best the sitter is only so much still-life painted like a dead fish on a platter or a brass bucket on the floor. The properties are "arranged" in the studio—usually for the fetching quality of costume if the sitter is a woman—and everything is painted just as it is seen, the face counting for little more than a flounce, the animate for little more than the inanimate. The pose is, of course, obvious in the sitter and equally apparent in the picture. The peculiar way of seeing, which is so necessary

to art, is conspicuously absent; and the mood of mind out of which things poetic spring into being, together with imagination, feeling, emotion, are not even suggested. We have the model, be it fish, flesh, or flounce, with all the glitter or smirk or sheen of it; but nothing more. This is craftsmanship pure and simple and not the best quality of it at that. It is an attempt to outdo the camera in presenting facts.

Things are in the saddle and ride mankind. How often one is dragged out of his happy home to see the work of the man who realizes the model! Your friends declare him a wonder, and talk about truth and reality and the everlasting verities; but when you see the portrait before you there once more is the same old catalogue of items. How weary one becomes of all that literalness and minutiæ, that over-modelled face that threatens to fall out of the picture-frame, that over-realized figure crowded forward into the foot-lights, that indurated background that not even an earthquake could crackle! One goes back to a portrait of Philip, by Velasquez, done perhaps from memory for the tenth time, to get the large truths of air and light, of man and

costume, not to say the dignity of the king and the sobriety of the monarch. Or to Titian. At the foot of the canvas in the celebrated Madonna of the Frari are the members of the Pesaro family, kneeling, while St. Peter intercedes for them with the Madonna, every one of the portraits, again beyond a doubt, done from memory. But what splendid types they are, how free from trivialities, how frank and simple and dignified! Nothing could be further removed than the thought of the model. One seems to feel that this is the way the scene actually occurred; and that Titian, unseen himself, looked in upon the group and afterward recorded the nobility of the presence.

But the model is not the *bête noire* solely of the portrait. It invades almost every department of art and creates vulgarity wherever it goes. The final result may not be failure and yet still be disappointing. It can hardly be thought that the minuteness with which the model is delineated and the facts are insisted upon in "Madame Bovary" is the secret of the book's success. Flaubert succeeded, in spite of all that, by and through the excellence of his workmanship. Courbet's "Demoiselles de Village," to take a pictorial parallel of the

time, is a picture of practically the same kind of people as those in the novel; but again the picture is redeemed by Courbet's masterful handling. It is quite the same thing with Zola's characters. You always feel their intrusive existence. He keeps pushing them at you. As he sees them they have no height or depth or thickness about them; they are the rag-tag and the bobtail of humanity and have not even the quality of uniqueness or singularity. What made him delineate such people? He never could have loved them, or caressed them, or grown emotional over them; it is not conceivable that he was ever so much as cast into a mood of mind about them. He was merely curious about them artistically, and put them on the model's stand for analysis, dissection, exploitation. He drew them with his sharp little pencil, put down everything petty about them, and overlooked everything that might be large or distinguished. What is the result? The model on the stand, being dressed and posed and made to talk to order in almost every page of the Rougon-Macquart series. Yes; the books are interesting, forceful, even powerful, but despite rather than by virtue of the models.

Perhaps the conception of human stolidity and stupidity in Parisian low life is better shown in Manet, the friend of Zola, than elsewhere in painting. Every one who is interested in the technical side of art knows that Manet was something of a genius with the brush, quite a perfect painter in a literal sense, a man whose medium of expression was peculiarly pigment. Not since the days of Velasquez has any one gone beyond him in pure painting. In addition to his wonderful fingers he had eyes that saw new truths in nature, and in that respect he was something of a discoverer. But there the tale ended. Not even his most ardent admirers ever loved the people of his canvas or cared for what they represented. He was always painting and realizing the model though he apparently decried it in favor of the "impression." As a matter of fact his "impression" was a newer and stronger realization of the model than had been given by any of the realists before him. It was so insistent that you cannot forget it for a moment. The model is always there—the same stupid creature that Zola used. The painter had no more emotion or love or feeling for those he painted than the novelist. They were mod-

els from the Latin Quarter, easily obtainable; and for Manet's purposes quite as good materials as a band of angels straight from heaven. Paint them as charmingly as he could and did, he never painted anything but the bare external facts. And those facts are the very things continually flung in our face by the skill and excellence of the artist. The "Bon Bock," "Olympe," the "Déjeuner sur l'herbe," the "Folies-Bergère" keep dragging us back to the commonplace obviousness of the model—always the model.

Now we are not quarrelling with Flaubert or Zola or Manet because of their choice of subject. If it is said that the characters are commonplace and stupid people from Parisian or provincial low life, we do not mean that the people themselves are necessarily that, but that the novelist and the painter have made them stupid by the precision of the drawing, and the everlasting adherence to the facts. They have multiplied observation and catalogued item upon item until any larger significance that might attach to either has been lost. Millet so far as reality is concerned had a heavier and a stupider person to deal with in the peasant than Manet in the boulevardier; but how does it

happen that his types are not stupid on canvas? Millet was born and reared among the peasantry and knew them well. From boyhood he had seen the swinging figure of the sower, the straining form of the spader, the bending body of the gleaner. He had seen the workmen at noonday in the fields, he had seen them at sunset against the sky, he had known them in all times and seasons. In addition he had long years to think about them, to grow sad or glad about them, to become indignant over their neglect in art, or possibly protestant about the hardship of their lot among the masses. At any rate he had a feeling for and about his own kind, and while in Paris he had a chance to see them in the fields through the haze of distance and gain a peculiar point of view. When finally he went back to Barbizon to paint the peasant he did not put him on the stand in his studio and tell him to pose. On the contrary he studied him anew in the fields where he worked, and then went back to his studio and painted him out of his head. He worked from visual memory, not from the actual model before him. With what results in art every one knows.

The difference between the "Bon Bock"

and "The Sower" is not so much the difference between city and country life in France as between the methods of Manet and Millet. One clung to the actual model and the other clung to a point of view about the model. But lest there be any misgiving about this difference, let us take the same subject, the peasant, in the hands of those who came after Millet. There is Bastien-Lepage, another peasant born, and with a more exact technique, gained from a severer training in Paris, than Millet possessed. Why did he never reach up so high as his predecessor? A different order of mind, a different temperament, it may be said; but was not the concrete working of that mind or temperament shown in the use of the model? Bastien painted in his garden, out-of-doors, and in that respect got away from the artificial lighting and surroundings of the studio; but he placed the actual peasant before him in the garden, posed him, drew him, realized him to the last button and shoestring. You cannot see poetry or charm or motion about him for the rain of facts. He is only so much still-life. Was it the recognition of this that led Degas to say that Bastien was "the Bouguereau of the new movement"? The

remark is not too exact in its comparison. Bouguereau painted an academic tradition and Bastien a human specimen, but both fell down through too much devotion to the externals.

That was the failing of all the other followers of Millet, the L'hermittes, the Julien Duprés, the Ridgway Knights. They caught at the form and missed the spirit. David in placing the gods and heroes of Greece and Rome upon canvas made the same mistake. Art does not lie in the model, be it boulevardier, peasant, or Greek god. It lies in the way you see and feel and paint. The old masters, from Fra Angelico to Tintoretto, Rubens, and Velasquez, painted crucifixions out of their head and gave to a horrible subject a loftiness, a dignity, a compelling grandeur. They made people believe in a Christ hanging and dying upon the cross. The picture was inspiring, uplifting, exalting. But a modern came along to show how much truer and better that theme could be handled at the present day. Bonnat had the dead body of a criminal hung on a cross in the court-yard of the School of Medicine in Paris, painted it precisely as it was before him, and called the picture "Christ on the Cross."

But what was the ultimate result as art? The figure never led any one for a moment to believe that it was the dead Saviour. It was only too apparent in the tortured body that it was the dead criminal. He had followed the model so closely that it was not possible to believe it anything but the model. All this had been demonstrated years before in Florence when Fra Bartolommeo painted a nude St. Sebastian for the convent of San Marco. He painted it so true to the model that people forgot the suffering saint in admiring the fine body; and we are told the picture, for that reason, had to be removed from the convent. Fra Bartolommeo had over-realized his model.

How much of that we see in the current exhibitions. After a few years of gallery-going we even come to know the people who pose for the painters. Here, for instance, is an old man with a shock of hair and sad eyes who is said to have a "fine head" and to be a good model because he sits restfully. Last year he appeared with a stuffed lion by his side and was called "St. Jerome"; this year he is covered with armor and is said to be "The Black Prince"; next year he will be in blue jeans as a worker in a rolling-mill, or wearing flannels

at the sea-shore as an old lover in the train of Miss Puff-Puff. But we never fail to recognize him under each and every name. The pretty girl with the empty head, how well we know her, too! She cannot make us believe that her superior air is not assumed nor can we be deceived by the transparent title of "A Lady with a Fan." She does not own either the ball dress or the fan. She never lived in those luxurious apartments. She is not to that manner born. Lady she may be, though the picture does not say so; model she certainly is however hard the picture may try to say she is not.

But some one may say: "Did not your old masters do the same thing? Was not Botticelli always painting La Bella Simonetta, and Raphael the Fornarina, and Perugino that pretty face? Do you not always recognize the model in Rubens?" The answer is yes—and no. They painted an abstraction, a type of their own creation and variation. Moreover, they painted it largely from memory, and got not its petty detail, but its nobler qualities. You recognize the type, to be sure, but is the model obtrusively apparent? Besides, to sidestep the question for a moment, who, save the

tourist, ever thought the pretty face of either Perugino or Raphael a fetching feature? Michael Angelo sneered at it. It was not a virtue but a weakness of their art. The old masters went lame at times and even Raphael had his little limp. As for Rubens, his art might have been the better for a less determined adherence to his Flemish type. But neither he nor Raphael nor Perugino nor Botticelli makes you think of his type as a model. It is too abstract for that; and yet perhaps at times concrete enough to be annoying.

But again let it be said that it is not the subject or the model we are quarrelling with, but rather the literal manner in which the painter sees and paints it. It is not that models—male and female after their kind—belong to the lower stratum of society, and that something of social cheapness creeps into the St. Jerome-Lady with a Fan picture; but rather that they are made cheap by the commonplace view and the dull hammering upon facts of the painter. The same thing occurs in landscape painting with nature for a model, whom no one could accuse of being commonplace—except perhaps Whistler. Nature has been

made vulgar enough by those who have insisted upon realizing all her obvious features and petty facts. The painter out-of-doors who sets up an easel in the fields or woods and paints there until his pigments freeze is quite in the modern spirit. He takes great credit for his realism and devotion to facts, and annihilates the critic who may cavil at his picture by telling him that was exactly the way he saw the scene and that the picture is precisely true in every respect. Possibly that is the trouble with it; it is too true—so true, indeed, that there is no room for feeling or imagination about it. The facts convince you by overwhelming you, by knocking you down.

There has possibly never been a time in the history of landscape painting when truth was not relied upon as a substitute for beauty, when the landscape model was not invoked to prove the veracity of the picture. All the biographies of the landscapists tell us how each particular genius stickled for truth, threw art teachings to the winds, and "went directly to nature." As though that were the sum of all the virtues in art. Gainsborough, for instance, cast aside tradition to paint what he saw in Suffolk woodlands, and Constable when asked

where he put his brown tree said he never used one. These are good tales wherewith to lard a biography, but unfortunately the pictures contradict them. Gainsborough "went directly to nature" after he found out how Ruysdael and Watteau painted landscapes; and Constable, when it served his purpose, as in the celebrated "Valley Farm," used the brown tree and made the traditional brown-fiddle picture. They took nature with several grains of art-tradition which possibly accounts for the fine quality of some of their work. When Constable really painted the Stour and the surrounding country from the model he grew prosaic and dull. As for Ruysdael, he never literally followed the model, but in its place accepted art-tradition filtered through Claude and Poussin. He produced a conventionalized landscape which, like Greek sculpture, had not too much exact nature back of it but a great deal of fine decorative art.

The realistic landscape has, however, been more prevalent in the last hundred years than ever before. The scientific spirit has set art circles buzzing until painters have at last come to believe that truth is the aim of everything—poetry, music, and painting included. Strange-

ly enough, the insistence is not so much upon the large and universal truths of nature as the small and accidental ones. The painter seizes on the leaf, the flower, the pebble, and by multiplying them indefinitely seeks to give the truth of the forest, the meadow, the sea-shore. Charles de Laberge and Cabat in France were minute enough in their imitations, but when Preraphaelitism broke out in England and the brotherhood began painting landscapes following those of Fra Angelico and Botticelli, then nature became merely a flat sheet of flickers and spots and particles. The Holman Hunts, the Rossettis, and the Madox-Browns never attained any truth of nature as a whole; but they reproduced enough surface detail from the model to make not only their figures but their landscapes a weariness to the eye. In vain the ardent advocacy of Mr. Ruskin. His long-drawn cry of truth simply sent the second crop of Preraphaelites to error. The landscapes of the Seddons, the Lewises, and the Bretts are eloquent of what both nature and art are not. Too close adherence to the supposed facts of the model ruined them. That this landscape represented a side hill near Jerusalem or that another one showed a

view of Gethsemane—the old reliance upon subject for interest—did not and could not retrieve the failure.

Standing apart from the scientific trend, apart from the long line of landscape painters who believed in the doctrine of truth, a few great men hold prominent place partly because of their dissent. Turner is one of the most marked. In spite of Mr. Ruskin's five-volume exposition of Turner as "the only man" who ever gave the truth of leaf or branch or mountain wall, the fact remains that he is about the only Englishman in art who deliberately made ducks and drakes of truth when it suited his purpose. He knew the truths of nature perhaps more thoroughly than Constable or any other landscape painter before him; but he deliberately distorted them, when it pleased him, to make an effective composition. This does not mean his liberties taken with topography—the pushing about of campanili at Venice or castles and towers at Heidelberg—but the falsification of color, light, shadow, drawing, for effect. Any one of his pictures in the National Gallery—even the "Frosty Morning," which every Englishman refers to for its truth—will be found more or

less false in shadows, lighting, values. He was a dreamer of dreams not a botanist nor an architect, a painter of visions not a recorder of happenings. He laughed in his sleeve at Ruskin; and, though he sketched as he travelled and knew nature very well, he rather laughed at her also. "Pictures!" he exclaimed. "Give me a canvas, colors, a room to work in with a door that will lock, and it is not difficult to paint pictures." There the artist speaks. He discarded the actual model and worked from visual memory in the studio. He carried his nature in his mind and painted her out of his head.

Corot did the same thing. As a young man following his master, Bertin, he drew in a small way and detailed everything with the model before him; but later in life he forswore all that, locked the door of his studio, and painted from memory. Rousseau and his Fontainebleau contemporaries went through a similar experience and finally emerged with a freer, broader landscape, founded to be sure on a study of nature, well grounded in fact; but not the crude transcript of the original so much as its impression mellowed by memory and distance. The impressionists in land-

scape who came after and claimed Turner, Corot, and the Fontainebleau men as their artistic forebears were in reality quite opposed to them in almost every way. They prided themselves on a closer adherence to the model than any of their predecessors, and called in science to confirm the truth of their prismatic air, their light, and their colored shadows. The work was really more remarkable for its development of new truths of nature and new technical methods than anything else. The hay-stacks and seas and cathedral towers of Monet were startling for their novelty rather than their beauty. People were amazed that sunlight could be so bright, that shadows were so high-keyed in color, that atmosphere was so blue, that the face of nature was so fickle and fleeting. It is only in his later years that Monet seems to have partially forsaken the model. The result is such superb canvases as those of the Thames series or the still later lily-pond pictures, so fine in decorative quality.

In America, to drive illustration into the last ditch, all of our famous landscapists in their better canvases have worked largely from visual memory. There is no doubt that men like Inness and Wyant and Homer Martin had an

intimate knowledge of nature gained at first hand, but they have so recently passed on that many of us remember how they used it, where and how they painted, what their point of view, what they strove to express. The men of to-day—Winslow Homer, Tryon, Weir—are working along similar lines and in a similar spirit. Every few years a band of new men returns from Paris with a new truth-to-nature slogan and much noise; but as these gradually cease to be new-comers, passing into a maturer period, they mend their manners, their point of view, and their method of treatment. They may still think some madness in Monticelli and Albert Ryder and Arthur Davies, but they also admit some method. They come to realize that however necessary truth may be to representation, art does not consist entirely in reciting facts, be the skill in the doing of it ever so brilliant.

To sum up our contention let it be said that in any department of painting the model must be learned and unlearned, must be studied and abandoned, must be forgotten and remembered before great art can be produced. It is absolutely necessary and yet is not to be revealed; it is the foundation and framework

of the structure and yet is not to be shown. The facts whereby the poet and the painter rise to heights of fancy should not be too much in evidence. If conspicuously apparent they may lead us down to earth more readily than up to heaven.

CHAPTER III

QUALITY IN ART

THE word quality in art is so widely used, and so generally confused in its meaning, that thus far it seems no one has had the hardihood to run it down and put it in the dictionaries. The picture buyer has it launched at him by salesmen in the art shop, the painters use it freely and somewhat indiscriminately in discussing pictures, and occasionally a writer on art weaves it into a sentence where it sounds well, or tends to create an impression of art knowledge in the writer. But they all take precious good care not to say precisely what they mean by it. Any attempt, therefore, at definition is likely to meet with dissent. However, let us make the attempt.

The use of the word by dealers is more often of commercial than artistic significance. They speak of pictures as importers do of wines, silks, or rugs. One kind of wine is of a finer quality than another kind, perhaps because it

is older; and one picture is of a higher quality than another, perhaps again because it is older, or is better known, or is a better piece of workmanship. This meaning of quality corresponds to grades, kinds, classes, and has to do chiefly with barter and sale. But dealers, as well as artists, sometimes use the word in a slightly different sense in referring to the tone or light or color or drawing of a picture. A certain work may be spoken of as having a deeper quality of color than another or a more brilliant quality of light. The meaning here is obvious enough. If you hold in one hand an American gingham and in the other hand a Pongee silk you must be aware of a difference in the quality of the texture, and if you try them closely with your eye you cannot help noticing also a difference in the quality of color. This meaning is so closely related to the commercial use of the word that it may even be applied in the first illustration. Wines have a flavor peculiar each to itself, and one who has knowledge may name the vintage at the first taste by its quality.

But these uses of the word are referred to only that they may be excluded from the present reckoning. They are not to our purpose,

though they have their place. A much closer approach to our meaning is found in the occasional references of both painters and writers to, say, the decorative quality of Japanese painting or perhaps the ideal quality of Greek sculpture. Here it is evident that quality is or may be an attribute of national art—something that belongs in a singular sense to some one nation. Japanese painting produces a pattern in form and color quite different from that of any other painting; it is a race expression in art that has not been, and cannot be, successfully imitated. It is unique. Again Greek sculpture in its centralized ideal quality is unique, original, and racial, because, so far as we know, it sprang from the peculiar make-up of the Greek mind and was not imported from without. Once more, it is not to be imitated with any marked success. Many nations have reproduced the forms of Greek art, but none of them has reproduced its spirit or ideal quality. Some may think that the Greeks pursued the ideal too far and lost thereby the realistic or representative character of art. That is not matter for present discussion, but we may note in passing that even the bow of Ulysses may be overstrung,

and that the finest quality of art is liable to have its defect.

This definition of quality whereby is meant an attribute of a nation's art is the very one I mean to deal with except that instead of applying it to nations I think to attach it to individuals. It is the quality peculiar to Velasquez or Dürer or Terburg that I would talk about, rather than the attributes of Spanish, German, or Dutch painting. And even with this limitation it will be necessary to divide the division once more by putting aside the mental qualities of the artist and adhering as closely as possible to the technical qualities of the painter. The mood of mind and its corollaries I have written about elsewhere[1] so I shall not now take up the sensitive in Lotto or the impulsive in Tintoretto or the pastoral-lyrical in Giorgione. It would be more to our purpose if we recognized the peculiar qualities of drawing, coloring, and lighting in these masters for those technical features are to be our immediate quest.

The use of the word, as we have limited it, would now seem to imply an individual way of doing things, what has been loosely termed

[1] "The Meaning of Pictures," chaps. II–IV.

a—style. The slip-shod vocabulary of the day would generally list the terms as synonymous, because people have accepted the misquoted definition of Buffon that "style is the man." In truth Buffon's meaning is just the reverse of that garbled extract. Style is not an individual attribute but a consensus of opinion as to the best way of doing or presenting a certain act or thought or feeling. In that sense there was a style about the sculpture of the Periclean period, established by the joint opinion of the Pheidian sculptors. A school way of modelling, composing, and handling was followed by all the sculptors of the time, and followed so closely that to this day it is not possible to say of the Parthenon marbles which were done by Pheidias and which by his pupils or workmen. There is a style about them all, but an individuality about none of them. Individuality would have been inharmonious, disturbing to the decorative quality of the whole; it would have resulted in something Gothic, not classic. In the case of the early Renaissance sculptors, however—Donatello, Verrocchio, and Jacopo della Quercia—individuality predominated and such a thing as adherence to a classic style or estab-

lished canon was not thought nor taught. Each measurably struck off by himself and was distinguished by his personal quality. With Michael Angelo the individual way of seeing, feeling, and doing became almost abnormal; and quality itself was, perhaps, marked by the defect of exaggeration. He was not a Greek, but a Goth, the first great romanticist, an individual who made laws unto himself and produced works possessed of a peculiar quality.

But quality is possibly not so much individuality itself as the resultant form of it. Mr. James according to his theory of fiction would measurably keep himself out of his work, keep his personality at least in the background by making his characters do the talking and the acting. But however elusive he himself may be, his novels do not fail to give evidence of his quality. His intellectual curiosity, his sensitiveness to impression, his subtlety of thought, his remorseless pursuit of an idea are all there. Even the defects of his art, his absorption in method, his overloading with detail and illustration, his losing of form to color and light are also there. Under them all you feel his quality rather than his indi-

viduality—that is, his peculiar way of seeing and doing. There is a James tang about it that is pervasive and not to be escaped.

There is no difficulty in pointing out a similar grain or mettle in any and all of the great writers. What do we mean by talking about verse that is Miltonic or Byronic or Tennysonian if not the recognition of a certain quality peculiar to each? There is a rhythm to the verse of Swinburne as there is a cadenced movement to the prose of Ruskin that is unmistakable. We recognize the verse or the prose as we do the voice of Lehmann or Materna or Sembrich. Each has its peculiar *timbre*. No one can sing Erda quite so effectively as Schumann-Heink, and no one can reach up to Edouard de Reszke in Mephistopheles, because no others have quite such quality of voice in those parts. It is a Schumann-Heink, a De Reszke quality of voice, something that has resulted from their individualities and is again unmistakable. And quite beyond deceptive imitation. There are concert-hall singers who give imitations of Eames or Nordica, as formerly of Patti and Gerster; but the imitation is largely confined to the externals of make-up, of manner,

of gesture. The voice is only parodied and deceives no one. In the same way there have been writers in the manner of Emerson or Carlyle or Stevenson, but no one has been deceived by them. The semblance may be there, but the quality does not hold good.

To come nearer to things graphic there is a quality in handwriting, which people often refer to and describe with the word "character." Each strongly marked individual shows it in his signature—shows a something peculiarly his own. By that I do not mean that he writes correctly in a writing-master sense. Indeed, the book-keeper's signature is devoid of quality—"lacks character"—though possessed of style; whereas the handwriting of a Napoleon may be very inaccurate and yet have quality of a most decided kind. It is the resultant of a peculiar and individual make-up, and has perhaps a physical as well as a mental basis. And, again, it is not to be imitated. The forger may trace the peculiar form or the eccentric lettering, but he cannot give the quality. That is just where he trips and comes to grief. It is well known that he does not use the flowing free line, but tries to produce its likeness by minute stipplings from

the point of the pen held upright. The result is his line is timid, hesitating, wanting in movement, where the original has verve and sweep about it. The writer is indifferent to a slip or a slight variation of his signature; but the forger dare not risk the slightest change. His forgery deceives those who glance at it hastily, perhaps; but not the expert. It lacks quality.

It is only a step from this to etching, and to the drawings of the old masters. The sharp stamp resultant from individuality is just as apparent in the etched line of Rembrandt, or Méryon, or Whistler as in the written page of Victor Hugo. Indeed, in such qualities as strength, delicacy, expressiveness, the etched line outruns the pen-and-ink of a Fortuny or a Vierge. In either medium the men are not to be confused or mistaken one for the other. The quality of each man's line, peculiar to his method or manner, is there as in the drawings of the masters. The drawings, being done as mere sketches or memoranda for future pictures and not for public exhibition, have spontaneity and character about them in an increased degree. No one can fail to note their quality. I mean now the quality of line, its strength here, its delicacy there, its width or

breadth or depth, its capacity for revealing what it encloses or suggesting what it omits, its value as contour or contrast or repetition, its beauty as decorative pattern, its expressiveness as representation—to mention only its more obvious uses and purposes. I do not mean mere mannerisms or eccentricities of line, which should be written down again as the defects of quality, such as the "eyes" and cross-puckers in Perugino's draperies, the square, dark-lined nails and bony fingers in Botticelli's hands, or the stringy, anatomical insistences in figures by Cosimo Tura or Cossa. These are defects which the imitator and the copyist mistake for quality, and the forger seizes upon because they give likeness (of a superficial kind) to the original. But they are not examples of the success of line.

It makes little or no difference what means or mediums are used to produce this line, whether silver-point, chalk, ink, wash, or oils. If the draughtsman have force and character his work will reveal them in any medium. A coal sketch by Daumier or Millet shows quality as readily as one of their finished pictures. It appears awkwardly and hesitatingly perhaps in early work, and becomes

intensified, perhaps exaggerated, in later work. To come at once to painting, the tondo of the "Holy Family," by Michael Angelo, in the Uffizi is only a beginning; the climax is the supreme figure of Adam on the Sistine ceiling. Again, the "Marriage of the Virgin" in the Brera, by Raphael, or his "Madonna del Gran Duca" is the pretty drawing of a youth trying to outdo his master; but the frescos in the Vatican reveal the youth come to mastery in linear drawing. Yet early or late, as the work may be with either master, the peculiar quality of each is there. It grows and intensifies with years and experience, but does not change or reverse itself. Pupils seize upon its outer form and exaggerate it until the Adam becomes a mere lumpy giant with Salviati and Vasari, and the Madonna a sweet simpleton with Carlo Dolci, but no one is deceived or misled by the imitations. The tang of the master remains in the one, and the want of it is apparent in the other.

What a world of quality lies in clean, clear drawing! To reveal it does not require extent of canvas, or historic subject, or literary significance. When Terburg draws a chair leg or a fold of a table cover he puts his stamp

upon it by doing it in his peculiar way, and that stamp is sufficient. All the small niceties of the Dous and the Meissoniers cannot make up for it or approach it. They torture the canvas in vain, producing nothing distinguished, nothing possessed of vital quality. As with Terburg's chair leg so with Van Dyck's drawing of an eye. Look at the eyes in the Van der Geest portrait in the National Gallery in London, and where in the world of painting can you match such drawing as that! Compare them with eyes drawn by Rossetti, or Burne-Jones, or almost any modern painter, and note how instantly the latter falls down for lack of quality. Even a jaw by Antonello da Messina may have the power of astonishing by virtue of its telling the truth in such a way that there seems no more to say. The misshapen mouth and heavy chin of the "Sir Thomas More," by Holbein, in the Louvre impresses one as a finality. It has the stamp of Holbein's quality and is absolutely inimitable. Drawing could go no further than that.

Linear drawing is, of course, only one of the avenues along which genius in art travels. Those who are primarily devoted to form use it as perhaps their strongest means of expres-

sion, and yet there have been great masters who have revealed form by light and shade. Leonardo is one of the earlier instances, and perhaps not the best, and yet Leonardo was able to show his quality there nearly as well as in line. His shadow is perhaps too smoky; but what a revelation it was to those of his day! And what a following embraced it! The greater men revised it, added to it, made it something of their own. No doubt Giorgione and Correggio derived directly or indirectly, as regards this feature, from Leonardo; but what individual quality they put in their revision! The weaker men—the followers, imitators, and slavish pupils—they, too, "derived" from Leonardo; but by exaggeration, caricature, and a loss of quality. At Milan, Luini and his companions followed blindly and often with a stumble; at Ferrara, Dosso Dossi outdid Giorgione in darkness while Garofolo grew sooty in his shadows; at Naples, Caravaggio plunged the model into an ink-well, then rubbed off the ink in spots for high lights, and called the sharp contrast sunlight and shadow. Quality was lacking in every one of the followers.

But it came into art again at the north

and showed in the shadow of Rembrandt. Could anything be more indicative of quality, and again more inimitable, than that shadow under a broad-brimmed hat or around a figure or weirdly filling a room—that shadow that hides and yet reveals, makes mystery and yet suggests truth? Its very quality of luminosity baffled the Backers and the Flincks. They tried for it but got it too dark like Maes, or too light like Bol. It is the line of departure between Rembrandt and his pupils, and is so broadly marked, so sharply drawn, one marvels that the connoisseurs who assign pictures to their respective painters cannot see it. As it is almost every gallery in Europe has pictures with pot-black shadows and square-block hands put down to Rembrandt that should be given to his school. Light-and-shade is a peculiarly distinguishing quality of the Dutch master, and though during his different periods he varied it, grew warmer, grew hot and foxy with it, he never lost the clarity and the mystery of it.

Color, we are told, is not a good test of quality in the old masters because so much of it has disappeared through bad cleaning or under coats of repainting and varnish; but I

fancy there is still enough left in spots here and there to give us an intimation of the original. The larger pictures are almost always the ones repainted the most, and we usually have no need to be warned about them. Titian's "Assumption" in Venice shows on its face a lack of color-quality, so no one is surprised to hear that it has been entirely repainted. The red flush on the face of the "Venus Equipping Cupid" in the Borghese Gallery says again that a later hand has here covered over the Titian of it; but what shall we say about the "Sacred and Profane Love" hanging on the opposite wall, or the Pesaro Madonna of the Frari, or the "Tribute Money" at Dresden? They are early Titians and give a color quality that grew deeper later on in his life; but have they not still the ring of genius about them?

All the Venetians had the color-sense, but each in differing degree and quality. Palma is possibly at times the most refined, Paolo Veronese the most ornate, Giorgione the most jewel-like. Paris Bordone was devoted to a peculiar crushed-strawberry red, Francesco Bassano had a fancy for an apple green, and Tiepolo for a straw yellow—any one of them

perhaps easily enough imitated in a superficial manner, and yet to the trained eye inimitable in their quality. The younger Palma played the sedulous ape to Tintoretto, copying his coloring and light as closely as he could, but what a difference between the original and the copy! Domenico Tiepolo followed his father, but again what a gap between them! And of all the young Vecelli and Caliari that stepped meekly after Titian and Paolo not one of them ever approached their masters in color quality. Painters to this day are bothering over Titian's palette, and wondering how he ever got such depths of color, such glowing surfaces. The secret is lost, they say; the palette has been destroyed, and no one knows now how it was set. But this would seem a foolish lament. There are more colors to-day than in Venetian days, and just as brilliant. The thing that is lost and can never be recovered is the quality of Titian.

There is a similar lament from the moderns because they cannot reach up to some of the ancients in flesh coloring. That is another secret, another lost art according to the people in the studios; but when we again have a genius like those who have gone hence

the flesh color will return with him. There is no recipe for it. It is a quality of the man behind the brush. Titian's flesh coloring was very different from that of Rubens, but how excellent is either, or both! Strangely enough, their pupils could not produce it, though in the studio, grinding colors, setting the palettes, and assisting the masters in painting. They could not be ignorant of the master's palette and what pigments he used. In the Dresden Gallery there are two pictures of "St. Jerome in the Wilderness" placed close to each other, one by Rubens, and one by his pupil Van Dyck. The pictures are the same in size, composition, and color scheme —the Van Dyck being evidently only a slight variation of the Rubens. At the first glance one cannot help comparing them in their flesh coloring. Rubens is cool, clear, convincing to the last degree, whereas Van Dyck is hot, apoplectic, saturated with blood at the surface— Van Dyck who is usually so fine in flesh tones. The pupil fails in quality. Not one of the many in the Rubens paint-shop but tried to reproduce the quality of the master's flesh painting; and not one succeeded. Jordaens, Crayer, De Vos, Jansens were as water unto

wine compared with Rubens. He was inimitable. Even to this day that flesh color defies the copyist. It may be pried into and the fact noted that the painter uses a brown underbasing, bluish half-tones, reddish shadows, and pearl-like high lights; that he introduces red shadows between fingers and toes, and in the nostrils and ears; but this no more explains the quality of Rubens's painting than an analysis of rhythm, metre, assonance, alliteration explains the quality of Shelley's poetry. The one-time despised and rejected Marie de Medici pictures in the Louvre (and among them are some excellent things) will furnish such quality of color, not only in flesh but in such simple things as a yellow silk, or a red brocade, or a blue velvet, as are not to be matched in any one of the ten thousand pictures in the Louvre. You cannot find such heights and depths and resonance of hue outside of the Rubens canvases. It is his color, his quality, that makes for such universal scope.

There was another feature of Rubens that the pupils failed to carry away with them or inherit after the master's death. I mean his handling. His was easily the most facile as

well as the most certain hand that ever grasped a brush. He did not load or drag or thumb or make little hillocks of paint on the canvas in attempts at modelling. He painted thinly, with free-flowing pigments. The brush slipped ever so easily, making no mistakes, recording light, shade, color, drawing, apparently with one stroke. It is the last word in facility, and yet while giving the appearance of spontaneity it undoubtedly was premeditated and largely due to much practice. But all the practice in the world did not produce it in his pupils and cannot to-day produce it in his imitators, copyists, or forgers. It was his own peculiar performance, and has his own quality about it.

All the great masters had the cachet of quality in their brush work. No two of them are alike. Just now the painter-people have gone quite daft over the handling of Velasquez and talk as though his were the only way of painting a picture, but there is Frans Hals at Haarlem who has his advocates too. Hals was not so infallible as Velasquez; he dashed here and there, and in getting a spirited surface sometimes lost drawing under it. But he was usually effective in what he did and

he to-day commands applause for his animation. How different are these two painters from Rembrandt and Vermeer of Delft, or these again from Watteau and Fragonard, or these again from Goya or our own Mr. Sargent! It is not possible to imitate them. Think of one trying to handle in that staccato manner of Watteau! His pupil Pater tried it, but to-day the gap between the master and pupil can be gauged by this very feature. No one who knows Watteau's work can mistake that of Pater for it, any more than Carreño's brush can be mistaken for that of Velasquez.

If our illustrations have any pertinence whatever it must be by way of suggesting, not only that quality is the highest technical attribute of art, but that it is about the only attribute that cannot be successfully copied, imitated, or forged. There is no difference whatever between accurate copies of, say, the "Sistine Madonna," or the "Mona Lisa," and the originals of those pictures save in this very matter of quality. The drawing and the grouping are as easily copied as the lighting or the coloring. They can all be reproduced, but the reproduction will not have the verve, the spirit, the quality of the original. It will

appear hesitating, flat, and spiritless because a Raphael or a Leonardo individuality is not resultant therein. As for the forger, he and the copyist may be of kin and work alike, and their reproduction of Filipino's hard-edged hand or Bellini's round ear may be deceptive to the last degree. They can imitate an eccentricity exactly; but the one thing they are fearful about, because they cannot reproduce it, is the quality of the drawing, coloring, lighting, handling. There, under close inspection, the old copy and the forgery go to pieces. Like counterfeit coin, they do not ring true.

Now, as every one knows, a new school of connoisseurship, based on the so-called science of Giovanni Morelli, has had an arbitrary sway in art matters for the past twenty years; but oddly enough this band of really learned critics has signally failed to reckon with quality as an aid in questions of attribution. With the exception of Mr. Berenson, whom I shall quote presently, they seem to ignore such a thing, where they do not vilify it. Seldom do they knowingly apply it in the practical test of who painted such and such a picture. Instead of that they have followed, rather blindly, the lead of Morelli who based

his study, not upon the quality of the different masters, but on their mannerisms and eccentricities—the very things caught at by their pupils and followers, reproduced by their imitators, and forged by the little rascals of to-day. The crooked forefinger that Botticelli drew continually, the long ear of Mantegna, the heavy upper eyelid of Leonardo, the balled thumb of Titian, the long, tapering fingers, and the spreading toes of Van Dyck, are about the easiest things imaginable to imitate or copy. If they are a little overdone the eccentricity becomes the more readily recognizable and is (to the uninitiated) a surer proof of authenticity. The zigzagged drapery of Benozzo, the stringy anatomy of Crivelli, the landscape background of Lorenzo Costa, or the straw-colored sky of Correggio, what things are these wherewith to determine authorship when every little whipper-snapper in the bottega was imitating them, and any one could reproduce them after a fashion?

But let us not misjudge. Morelli and his following have done a very necessary work for art history, and their systematizing of the mannerisms of painters has proved a very

valuable aid in connoisseurship. Unfortunately their system is not infallible and in that respect is not so scientific as its followers perhaps fancy. The eccentricities of a little man are worth something, provided he was too small to have imitators; but the eccentricities of a Botticelli or a Bellini or a Titian or a Raphael are nearly worthless as guides because of the horde of imitators who, as we know, caught at those very defects of the great ones. The feature that the pupils and copyists missed was quality—the only feature that cannot be imitated because springing out of inimitable individuality. And just here let me quote from Mr. Berenson, perhaps the foremost and most learned of present-day connoisseurs reared on the precepts of Morelli. In closing his chapter on "Rudiments of Connoisseurship," after demonstrating how mannerisms and tricks may be forged and copied, he says, and the italics are his: "Indeed, it may be laid down as a principle, that *the value of those tests which come nearest to being mechanical is inversely as the greatness of the artist. The greater the artist, the more weight falls on the question of quality in the consideration of a work attributed to him.* The

Sense of Quality is indubitably the most essential equipment of a would-be connoisseur. It is the touchstone of all his laboriously collected documentary and historical evidences, of all the possible morphological tests he may be able to bring to bear upon the work of art. But the discussion of Quality belongs to another region than that of science. It is not concerned with the tests of authenticity, . . . it does not fall under the category of demonstrable things."

Coming from a man who has made connoisseurship and the science of "demonstrable things" a study of years that is certainly a statement of much candor. It amounts to a very frank confession of the weakness of his own system. In addition it puts forward as a substitute to take its place, Quality, the "touchstone" of all his scientific data. But unfortunately Mr. Berenson insists that quality is "not concerned with the tests of authenticity" because forsooth "it does not fall under the category of demonstrable things." Is it possible that Mr. Berenson is confusing it with what the old-time connoisseurs used to call "soul" and "spirit," and that he is fighting it off as the vague and the indefinite, as

Morelli did before him? Is not the quality of line in the young Raphael recognizably different from his master Perugino in other respects than puckers and pot-hooks in the drapery? Is not the quality of color in Monticelli, of light in Monet, of atmosphere in Whistler, of textures in Vollon, of handling in Boldini as recognizable as the facial type of Botticelli or the standing figure of Mantegna? These are not mannerisms but very apparent qualities. They are so apparent to the trained student of art that he may stand in the middle of a gallery, to him unknown, and call off the painters by name; and perhaps seven times out of ten call them aright. If quality can be so recognized why is it not to be demonstrated? It is not a thing to be added up or subtracted like figures in mathematics, neither is it a mere mental figment. It is apparent in the workmanship, the technique of a picture, and is in fact a part of it. The trained eye knows the ruby red of Rubens and the sea green of Delacroix, as readily as the clear outline of Dürer and the golden light of Turner. Again, these are not mannerisms, but qualities that may be demonstrated as readily as abnormal ears and pro-

jecting middle toes. The latter are perhaps more apparent but are not more real. The difference between the obvious and the subtle may be in the perception of the man rather than in the things themselves.

Indeed, quality in art has not been demonstrated enough. Had it been used and applied practically, as a constant attribute of the best art, instead of faith being pinned to uncertain and easily imitated mannerisms some of our connoisseurs would not to-day be the laughing-stock of the man in Philistia. To take the most modern instance there is the director of the Berlin Gallery, a really great expert in art though always a little beside the mark in his conception of Leonardo, insisting upon a certain wax bust being by the hand of the master simply because it has the Mona Lisa smile upon the face. Did he not know very well that all of Leonardo's pupils and imitators copied the smile and that almost any one could reproduce it? Had he asked if the bust possessed the Leonardo quality of contour, line, and modelling—not to mention the mental stamina of the master—he would not have been misled by the simpering imitation of a Victorian sculptor.

The same smile on the face of the "Madonna of the Rocks" in the National Gallery, London, for years misled people into thinking that Leonardo painted the canvas; but here again the imitator and pupil of Leonardo reproduced the mannerism of the master in a way that deceived and misled. Ask yourself now about the quality of the light-and-shade or drawing in the picture, and instantly it fails to respond. The picture shows the inferiority of Ambrogio da Predis rather than the superiority of Leonardo. The pupil could copy an obvious ear-mark but not a resultant individuality. Connoisseurship now accepts the Louvre "Madonna of the Rocks" as the genuine Leonardo; but is that a final or a correct judgment? Again ask this Louvre altar-piece, if you will, if it possesses the drawing and light-and-shade of Leonardo, and the answer must be hesitating and uncertain. The contours are too thin, the shadows too frail, the draperies too brittle, angular, and (at the bottom where the Madonna kneels) too regular in their foldings. The color again lacks body, and the landscape wants breadth and atmosphere. And yet it may be Leonardo's work. The argument that the king

can do no wrong is specious in art. Sometimes the great masters throw off inferior work and this may be Leonardo in a mediocre vein helped out by assistants or pupils. It is certainly not Leonardo at his best. It lacks somewhat in quality.

After reading Mr. Berenson's paragraph one wonders if the connoisseurs who sneer at quality have not occasionally used it, perhaps unconsciously, as an aid in their attributions. Years ago when Morelli caused a commotion in the Dresden Gallery by declaring that the little "Reading Magdalen" was not by Correggio, had he arrived at that conclusion because he found no Correggio mannerisms in it? Was the neck and figure wanting in elongation, or the mouth not turned up at the corners, or the straw color missing, or the light not sufficiently centralized for the Parmesan master? Or did he just arrive at the safe conclusion that there was not a scrap of Correggio's quality in the picture? When, in the next room he declared that the so-called Sassoferrato "Venus" was not a Sassoferrato but a genuine Giorgione, was his belief founded on certain ear-marks that he found

to be Giorgionesque in the picture, or did he arrive at it by recognizing the Giorgionesque quality of it? After he denied genuineness in the one and asserted it in the other, how quick we all were to note the lack of quality in the Magdalen and the presence of it in the Venus!

Blunders just as egregious as these are still made in European galleries while connoisseurs and gallery directors are looking up documents, consulting signatures, and measuring ears and noses, instead of training the eye straight on the quality of the work. There are half a dozen or more canvases in the National Gallery attributed to Velasquez, and any one may see almost at a glance that they are not of the same or even similar quality. The difference in them is not a difference between an early and a mature style of Velasquez, but between the man and his pupils. It is not possible that the bust portrait of Philip, the "Admiral Parejo," and "Christ Bound to the Column" were by the same hand. Even the celebrated "Rokeby Venus" if put in the Velasquez room at Madrid would give out a discordant note. It is a little off key because not of a pronounced Velasquez

quality.[1] In the Vienna Gallery a small "St. Sebastian" still stands in the catalogue under the name of Correggio although it has not the slightest Correggio note in it. It belongs somewhere very close to Giorgione and in the quality of its drawing and light-and-shade is quite worthy of Giorgione's earlier years. In the same gallery the eight or more pictures ascribed to Velasquez quarrel with each other and five out of the eight give no hint of the master's quality. The Raphaels in the Louvre, the Rembrandts at Berlin, the Rubenses in Antwerp are contradictory and denying groups. Almost any gallery one may enter, in spite of exact and scientific knowledge freely disseminated by connoisseurs, is open to the criticism of having accepted the superficial appearances and rejected the more abiding technical qualities of the masters.

But enough has been said, perhaps, to prove the value of quality in art. It is not only the distinguishing but the most distinguished feature of painting, the one that reveals in-

[1] Since writing this the Venus has been declared by the art critic of *The Morning Post* to be a Mazo, and Mazo's name or cipher has been pointed out on the canvas. A jury of gallery directors sat in the case, however, and have given the lady a character as a genuine Velasquez.

dividuality in its clearest light, and is because of its individuality inimitable. In that respect quality is of the greatest value in connoisseurship. Indeed, it is to be doubted if ever there was any accurate judgment of pictures, any sound connoisseurship, without it. Morelli must have used it more or less while pretending to despise it under the name of "soul" and "spirit"; and his successor, Mr. Berenson, frankly confesses it the final test of a picture. Perhaps when the present phase of art criticism has passed out we shall have a more general return to the nobler features of art among which one must certainly rank quality. Just now art-interest seems to settle more about the painter, the cost, and the pedigree of a picture than about its quality or decorative charm.

CHAPTER IV

ART CRITICISM

Was it Huxley, or some mundane soul of his immediate kind, who insisted that "everything sooner or later is reduced to a matter of finance?" The remark sounds English, as though some Londoner visiting in America had written it home as description of our present state. And the worst of it is that it sounds more than half true. Not that America is so far ahead of Europe in commercialism that the latter cannot be seen in the race, but that she usually leads and gives cry sooner than the other. Wherever it is possible to apply the dollar standard she applies it. Brains that have a "cash value," newspapers that carry by the size of their circulation, books that are "the best sellers," teaching and preaching, service and song, that are estimated by salary, are not fancies but facts. As for art that was long since run in at the dealer's shop, or haled incontinently to the auction block, where it is sold to the highest

bidder and eventually finds its way into a public gallery, or into what is called "a private collection."

What a keen interest there is in the picture market, in the prices fetched, and in the collector or gallery that gets a certain work of art! The cables between here and Europe are kept in a state of heat recording this bid or that sale or the other purchaser at Christie's or Agnew's or Sedelmeyer's. A Velasquez fetches two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars and every one stares, until a Flemish tapestry is sold for three hundred and sixty thousand, or a Hals portrait group brings five hundred thousand. Then every one and his friends whistle a bit and await with eagerness the next battle of the millionaires. The astonishing thing to the mob seems to be not the picture but the price. How does a scrap of canvas held together by paint skins and varnish happen to be worth such an enormous sum of money? True enough, how does it? What is the criterion of value in a work of art? For what are the amateurs and collectors paying their money! Is it the name, or the pedigree, or the art in the picture that they struggle for so violently?

No doubt the first is always an attraction. The names of the great masters are pronounced trippingly upon the tongue these days, and it means something of distinction to the gallery or the collector to have those names blazing in brass from the gold frames. The amateur's gallery is not complete without a Velasquez, so perhaps he buys a Mazo from his friend, the dealer, and pays a Velasquez price for it. Or it may be that the missing name is one of recent discovery, an El Greco perhaps, and once more the amateur gets a cramped and mannered composition by El Greco's son at the father's prices. It is to have "an example" of Romney or Rembrandt or Rubens rather than a good work of art by anybody or nobody, that is the original impulse in, say, three cases out of four. Of course, the best examples of the great men are not knocking about the auction-rooms and the shops of the dealers; but there are inferior examples or even old copies that may be had at superior prices.

Sometimes the picture is genuine enough; it has the name but perhaps nothing more. There is, by way of illustration, the Raphael called the "Madonna of St. Anthony of

Padua" in the National Gallery, loaned by one of our most famous collectors. It is said to have cost four hundred thousand dollars, but artistically and as an example of Raphael it is wholly negligible. It sheds no light upon the painter, it casts no lustre upon art; it is not of importance in any way. But it has the Raphael name. There is, again, the famous "Angelus" of Millet, sold for one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars, which is artistically of no great importance, being an indifferent "example" of the painter. For a man who cared not for names but only for art, it might be worth a hundred dollars to cover a break in the wall-paper of the library; but that is about all. Once more there is the Soult Murillo, the "Immaculate Conception," now in the Louvre, which fetched the enormous price of six hundred thousand francs in 1852—the largest price at that time ever paid for a picture. If it were appraised artistically to-day it would fall quite flat. The "St. John of God," in the hospital of La Caridad at Seville, is worth a dozen of it; and no dozen of Murillo's pictures put together would be worth any such sum as the "Immaculate Conception" brought. But it has the name.

The collector dearly loves a name and will have it. It sounds well when he talks to his friends about his pictures; it looks well in his catalogue; it puts him into art history, and gives him rank among his fellow-collectors. He also dearly loves a picture with a pedigree, and is willing to pay handsomely for it. That a picture has been known for a hundred years or more, and has been in the collection of the Dorias or the Duke of Westminster, means that the price is pushed up in accordance with the record. The "Rokeby Venus." How much of the two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars paid for it went for the "Rokeby," and how much for the "Venus" or the picture itself? What more or better assurance of a picture's rank and worth would you have than to know it is, for instance, "the celebrated Chigi Botticelli"? Any collector might be forgiven if he made an undignified scramble for such a gem. It would be the star picture of his gallery. And there is the famous "Duchess of Devonshire," by Gainsborough, with not only pedigree but romance attached to it. Was it not worth seventy-five thousand dollars to have her cut out of her frame and "lost" for twenty-five

years? The picture itself—but that is quite another matter.

Of course we know (or have been told) that true art is more than coronets, but it is astonishing what an overshadowing influence the coronets exert. It seems quite futile to protest that art should be divorced from names and collections and auction-rooms. Hereafter it is the "Kahn Hals" or the "$500,000 Hals"—either or perhaps both. The picture and its painter are not responsible for the name, and never had anything to do with the money; but art has fallen upon commercial days and must fare accordingly. And again it seems quite useless to suggest that this particular picture is not, artistically, a great Hals. The public will not listen to such cavilling. If not the most blooming, blazing, fine Hals on earth why did any one pay half a million for it? Answer me that if you can. They would have kept it in Europe if they could, but we had the longer purse. Now that they have lost it they are mad clear through. Besides the critics are quite bowled over by it, and the newspapers are giving columns to "appreciations" of it.

Yes, unfortunately the critics, or more

properly speaking the newspaper reporters, devote much space to anything that is of popular interest; and it is not to be denied that they have a large interest in auction-shop figures and collections. The commercial phase of art is something they cannot ignore if they would. Their readers would not let them. And aside from the reporters, the professional art critic himself is interested in names, collections, auctions, prices. He is concerned with the authenticity and genuineness of pictures as never before in the history of art. Most of the false attributions of pictures, the listing of copies as "replicas," even some of the forgeries, have come about through the mendacity or the ignorance of dealers and collectors; and it is not a small part of the business of present criticism to clear up this sheet of lies and straighten out the record. The critic is not only judge but he often has to turn himself into grand jury and prosecuting attorney as well. He must not only know about pictures but know also about picture forgers and picture prevaricators.

Expert knowledge of pictures or "connoisseurship," as it is called, is a decided item in the equipment of the modern art critic. Re-

cently there have been many experts following the footsteps of the late Giovanni Morelli, or concocting systems and sciences of their own. They have been revising the catalogues of public galleries, quarrelling with gallery directors and with themselves, advising with would-be purchasers and dealers, sometimes unearthing unsuspected Titians and Rembrandts for them, and finally reconstructing and rewriting art history. They have been of more service to history perhaps than to art, but possibly they will some day awake to the conclusion that after the history is straightened out there may be something still left to say about the art. I mean the æsthetic side of art, which seems to have been forgotten.

It may be that there is occasionally a sordid reason for the existence of this modern criticism. It has been plainly hinted more than once; but that is a theme we need not pursue at the present time. It is pleasanter to point out that there are other reasons for "connoisseurship," and that the work itself is interesting enough to draw many followers in its wake who care nothing for money or dealers or collectors. Strangely enough, there are quite a number who are absorbed by it as they might

be by a puzzle or a game. They become detectives, running down an old master and establishing his identity by a broken button, the missing half of which belongs in another picture, in another gallery, on the other side of the world. To study a master like Giotto or Gentile da Fabriano, to memorize his methods, mannerisms, and eccentricities, and then to use them as clews in detecting pictures of his under false names, is a fascinating pursuit in itself. Many clews and hints come in from other sources as circumstantial and confirmatory evidence. The web grows, the plot thickens. The painter's master, his own pupils, the whole school, the people, the country, the age are finally spread upon the board. When these factors are rightly put together, the identity of the master established, the history of his school finally reconstructed, the connoisseur may be pardoned for thinking that the game was worthy of the effort.

The type is the first thing that the amateur detective notices. He soon comes to know the faces of Perugino, of Pintoricchio, of Botticelli, of Benozzo. Then he begins to note tell-tale colors, lights, compositions, handlings. Finally he gathers up minor mannerisms of

drawing, or accessory objects in still-life or landscape that are continually repeated. He grows cunning in his recognition of Mantegna's architecture, of Santa Croce's yellow-streaked sky, of Gentile Bellini's high-lights, of Moretto's silvery tone. Possibly he grows cautious when he is misled by the imitation of these, or similar mannerisms, in pupils, and is thus thrown off the scent. That academic Van Dyck hand was also painted by Lely and many another that came after; that Tintoretto halo back of the head was appropriated by every one of his followers. But he has a Sherlock Holmes tenacity in running down an old master, as one would a great criminal; and he keeps on gathering evidence. Very often he succeeds in establishing an identity—in revealing the true painter in his picture. Thus have been detected some famous masterpieces masked behind second-rate names in galleries, in collections, even in dealers' shops. The game is certainly amusing.

Occasionally the connoisseur who is fond of old-master hunting finds difficulty in hiding his successes from the world. He cannot help boasting about them a little in the magazines, and accompanying his articles with

the pelt in the shape of photographic illustrations. Almost all of our connoisseurs are contributors or perhaps associate editors of magazines, or at least in some way connected with periodical publications and the press. That is their outlet to the world. And some of them use it on very slight provocation. A new master or a new picture, whether good or otherwise, is often sufficient excuse. Of course the great men and their works are accounted for. All the Leonardos and Raphaels and Titians have been heard from; and anything that is known about them, and is matter of history, is lacking in present interest. The knowledge of it is referred to as "one of the commonplaces of history," and is lightly dismissed from notice. But if a clew can be gotten about one of their second-rate pupils, together with a supposititious picture, and some confirmatory gossip of an Anonimo, why then the item becomes interesting, even important or "significant." Such investigation is often called "original research," and the investigator is occasionally hailed as thane that was and king that is to be. Of course his exploitation is as interesting to the art public as pulling rabbits out of silk hats. A new mas-

ter discovered under a coat of whitewash in a neglected chapel! A work of art of priceless value discovered in a miser's garret! A diamond found in a dust heap! Every one stops to listen.

Unfortunately the diamond that is exploited in print often turns out to be a poor little affair of limited lustre; or, if it is very brilliant, it is suggestive of some deceptive tinsel back of it. The majority of "finds" in these days are of inferior men who might just as well have been left undisturbed in their oblivion, or of inferior pictures that not all the "booming" in the world will elevate to a position of importance. The newly discovered master has his day, and perhaps finally gets into the index of an art history; and the exhumed masterpiece knocks about dealers' shops until finally it passes into a collection, and is not heard from again perhaps for many years. Some good doubtless comes out of the research, though occasionally the man of straw, set up for admiration, fails of acceptance. It was Morelli, I think, who discovered in Venetian painting three Bonifazi, two of whom are still shadowy personalities; and Mr. Berenson manufactured Amico di Sandro out of his

head and cast him upon an unbelieving world; but neither incident should blind us to the valuable discoveries that both these men have made in misunderstood or neglected painters and pictures. They have shed valuable light upon the dark spots of art history and deserve much credit therefor.

Shedding light upon history is, indeed, the chief reason for the existence of the connoisseur. He is establishing the facts and helping to straighten out the confused and much-tampered-with record. That he sometimes gives his discoveries undue importance when he comes to dovetail them into history, or that the new histories themselves are sometimes wanting in judicial poise or critical acumen is true; but history in general has suffered from the personality of the writer ever since the world began, and art history is not exceptionally warped or biassed thereby. Something will be said hereafter about the new method of reconstruction; but just here it should be said that the connoisseurs should be credited with the industry and insight they have shown in getting at the facts. They have labored long and patiently at this, and if they are sometimes too close to their facts to gen-

eralize about them the facts are still there, and will furnish material for others who may come hereafter.

There is another thing to be dealt with hereafter which should be at least noted now. This is that connoisseurship has to do with the past, not the present. It burrows among the old masters and is learned about what are vulgarly called "antiques." There are connoisseurs not only in painting and sculpture, but in furniture, glass, silver, tapestries, rugs—anything that is old. The expert is made necessary in any and all these departments by the existence of the forger. There is a great and growing demand for things that are "very old," and the forger is supplying the demand as fast as his means and machinery will allow. It is a little odd this fancy for things ancient and this incessant exploiting of antiquity. One wonders just what would have come out of Greece had all the Greeks been crying in chorus for Egyptian or Assyrian sculpture, or what we should have known of Italian painting had Vasari and his kind spent their days resurrecting old Persian and Hittite masters. However, let us be thankful for the knowledge and intelligence of the connoisseur;

but let us not blink the fact that he has only a languid interest in contemporary art and that usually he likes the art of almost any nation better than that of his own.

This is a limit upon his field of survey which would not perhaps be objectionable if it did not, by inference, create the impression that there is no other field worth surveying. Old art is not necessarily the best art—except for the purpose of the connoisseur. The reason why it is best for him just now is that he chooses to regard the old picture as a commodity, a trick puzzle, a historical fact—almost anything except a work of art. He is interested in a passing phase or a fancy, and has perhaps lost sight of the ulterior meaning of all art. When the hurly-burly's done, when the attributions are all in, and the old masters duly ticketed and pigeon-holed, what then! When history has been accurately written and the last inference of facts duly drawn, what then! Are there to be no more cakes and ale of art criticism? Is there nothing to be thought, said, or spoken, about the significance of art as art, no more studies in resultant individualities, no more thinking about moods and emotions, no more admiration for form

and color independent of price, of name, of school, or of history? Is art merely something to be bought in a shop, to be listed in a catalogue, to be hustled in and out of collections, to be summed up in history—no more? It is doubtful if the world will agree to that.

For since the beginning art has had to do with life and use. It had perhaps at the very start a decorative aim. It has still. The charm of a blue hawthorn jar is not in the name of the maker, or the price it fetched at auction, or the place it holds in history, but in its loveliness as form and color. It is a delight to the eye, whether it says anything to our mind or not. No one knows who did the Parthenon marbles, or how much they cost, or what their pedigree, but from the remains of them we know that they once filled frieze and metope and pediment quite perfectly, and must have been a joy to even an Athenian mob. There is supreme repose, perfect form and unity, matchless workmanship in the so-called "Three Fates" that ask no questions about subjects or names or attributions. They are above all that. Not even German theories and bookishness can drag them down to the material and make them merely a commodity.

The Samothracian Victory came from Samothrace, and she is a Victory; but what is that to Hecuba or any other wanderer in the Louvre? The decorative play of that drapery, strained backward by the wind, is what people see and are thrilled by.

Again what fine things there are in the European galleries without name or history which remain untouched by modern criticism. There is, for instance, the "St. Helena" in the National Gallery, dubiously attributed to the Venetian school and at one time thought to be by Paolo Veronese. What a lovely thing it is in color despite its lack of name and auction-room notoriety! It would seem as though it should have some interest even for jaded connoisseurs; but they keep passing by on the other side of it. No one looks at it except the person interested in art as art. Such a person might pause again in the German room before a portrait of a young German girl, ascribed to Lucidel, and think it quite lovely in its characterization and its coloring. But it has no history, and the name tacked on it is unknown to the average person; and naturally few people look at it. Every one is shunted, by his Baedeker or his gallery guide, further along

on the wall to see the huge Holbein called "The Ambassadors," which cost a large sum of money, and is about the dullest and stupidest Holbein in existence. The only compensation for it is that Holbein's portrait of "Christina, Duchess of Milan," is in the same room, and people cannot very well get by it without stopping to glance at its dark beauty.

In the Dresden Gallery every one crowds into that little square box of a room to see the "Sistine Madonna," rendered ridiculous by its false lighting and inappropriate setting; and of course very few of the visitors ever see the beautiful Palmas or the Vermeers in the other rooms. In the Berlin Gallery there is a similar scramble to see things that are "starred" in a guide-book or made famous by auction-room gossip and price. The so-called "Admiral Borro" is only glanced at, because the connoisseurs think it is not by Velasquez, and thus far have not been able to give it a different paternity. But what a superb portrait it is! What matter when, where, or how it came into existence! Is it not art, and that, too, of a very superior kind? At Vienna there are gorgeous pictures by Ru-

bens, famous Infantas by Velasquez, a puzzle picture or two by Giorgione, all of them talked about, written about, well known; but there are also half a dozen large landscapes there of supreme excellence and beauty by Bellotto that have never been dragged into the limelight, and are never looked at by any one except the art lover. In that gallery again are a half-dozen or more large pictures by the elder Breughel that are marvels of color and character, and will some day be written up as masterpieces of art, with accompanying abuse of human stupidity in not recognizing them long before.

Even when we go back to the illustrative side of painting we get something that contemporary criticism does not touch and rather despises. What magnificent types of the Renaissance are shown in Mantegna's frescos at Padua and Mantua, what Venetian life in Carpaccio's canvases at Venice, what Flemish seriousness in those portrait heads by Memling and others in the Van der Goes room of the Ufizzi Gallery! And they who still insist that painting has something to do with human emotion and passion, or at least a poetic mood or fancy, what things of import and of

moment do they not see in the little "Crucifixion," by Dürer, in the "Supper at Emmaus," by Rembrandt, in the Madonnas of Botticelli, Filippino, or Bellini! There is the alleged Velasquez of the "Christ Bound to the Column," in the National Gallery, which is full of pathos and emotion. It is not in the Christ alone, but in the pitying figures of the angel and the kneeling child. Has this anything to do with the question of attribution? Yes; just this much. No other picture by Velasquez shows any such emotion—any emotion of any kind. An inference may thus be drawn against the picture being by Velasquez. But what has this clew to the painter to do with the art of the thing painted? Nothing at all. In the last analysis neither name nor fame nor price nor authenticity has standing in the case. The work itself is art or it is not art; and it matters not where, whence, or how it became so. Connoisseurship may yet tell us to a certainty who did the "Venus of Melos," and whether she is a Venus or a Victory; but the beauty of the statue will not be enhanced or changed in any way thereby. As art it will always be just what it is now.

The grievance against the connoisseur as critic is, then, that he not only deals exclusively with ancient art, but that he deals with it as a commodity, a historical document, or a trick puzzle rather than as art. He is concerned with its record, its authenticity, and the influence or circumstances under which it is produced; and when those matters are settled his interest flags and he stops where art appreciation really begins. With its authenticity established the picture is ready for æsthetic analysis or synthesis; but connoisseurship, with a few exceptions, does not care to dip into that. The detective's work ends when the criminal is caught. The court can acquit him or hang him as it will; that is no affair of his. So, too, with the connoisseur. He handcuffs the facts and jails them in a book or article. Let the world do the rest so that he gets the history down aright. But does he always succeed in doing that? It may be that there is cause for fault-finding with some of the history that comes out of connoisseurship. Let us at least have a look at it.

CHAPTER V

ART HISTORY

THE writing of history is always more or less of an unsatisfactory task because there seems no finality about it. No sooner are certain characters summed up, and certain facts put down in print, than a new investigator comes along with another hypothesis, or newly discovered evidence, to overset the former conclusion. History has to be rewritten every ten years, it is said. Why? Presumably, because it is not written correctly in the first place. There is too much personal element in it, too much theory to prove or previous hypothesis to disprove, too much demanded of the facts. After a few years it becomes apparent that the evidence has been strained and common-sense violated. Then the particular volume is pushed down and out as "obsolete," and one perhaps equally fallacious takes its place. It is astonishing, when all is said and done, what a makeshift affair is this record of the race, this story of man, which we think must be true because we see it in a book.

The uncertain character of history in general becomes more positively marked when it deals with art in particular; because the materials are still with us to confirm or contradict, and after ten years they often do the latter. Perhaps the investigator has pushed his work too hard in the high-lights, drawn it too violently, colored it too highly. He has possibly noticed a few straws blowing in a certain direction, and has written it down that the whole field of grain was bent that way. And, of course, he has ignored, or is bent upon denying, the observation of any and all writers before him. The newer historian is especially denunciatory of his immediate predecessors; he denies the authority of the Vasaris when it suits his purpose to do so; he casts out records, public and private, as "petty documentation"; and as for tradition, that is not worth his attention in this scientific age when a proof positive is demanded. He wants the work of art itself studied scientifically as one might the flora and the fauna of the world, independently of documents or tradition.

All this sounds very well, sounds scientific. It looks as though we were finally to get at the facts. And sometimes we do. It is when the

facts are put together, and our art historian begins to generalize and draw conclusions from them, that trouble begins. We then find that perhaps he has accepted as fact something that is not proven, or that he has misunderstood its meaning, or misinterpreted it. Sometimes his assumed premises on one page become proven conclusions on the next page; and on the third page he is, perhaps, using them as the foundation and underpinning for a huge air castle which he has evolved out of his imagination. Usually he has a theory to prove, or a man to establish, or a method of investigation to exploit. He is a historian of imagination. The members of the craft will have it that the archæologist or historian is lost without what is called "the life-giving imagination." He must have a mind for the plausible and the possible, and an eye to see, for instance, a Praxiteles in a Roman garden sculpture, or a forgotten masterpiece by Leonardo in a sooty panel signed by Luini. And that as a general statement is sound enough. But it works out problematically in practice. Sometimes the imagination clicks all the facts together like the links of a chain and makes conviction positive; sometimes it

leaves the facts hanging at loose ends in the air; and sometimes it renders them fantastic and unbelievable. For example:

When Dr. Waldstein saw a water-worn marble head among a group of broken fragments in the Louvre his imagination told him almost instantly "that this was a work not Roman but Greek, and moreover of the great period of Greek art." He tells us further that "the conviction soon forced itself upon him that here was a piece of Attic workmanship of the period corresponding to the earlier works of Pheidias and, though reserving the final verification for the time when it would be possible to make a detailed examination and comparison with the metopes, he was morally convinced that this was the head of a Lapith, belonging to one of the metopes of the Parthenon." So far, so good; but had Dr. Waldstein stopped there and claimed a newly discovered fact in art history by virtue of his intuition or imagination he would not have been writing history but recording speculation. It was a mere conjecture and not a demonstration—not a fact proved. But, in this instance, Dr. Waldstein did not stop there. He ran down the tradition of that head and found in

it confirmation. He compared the kind of stone, the exact measurements, the treatment of frontal bone, flesh, and hair, the frown of the brow, the protrusion of the lip, the passion, spirit, and whole quality of the head, with the Parthenon metopes. Finally he took a cast of the head to London, fitted it on the shoulders of one of the Lapiths in the British Museum, and had the satisfaction of seeing that it fitted exactly, even to the lines of the fracture in the neck. That I should say was a proper exercise of the archæologist's imagination—nay, more, a stroke of real genius. And that is art history properly constructed, authoritative, and final in its conclusion. That chapter at least will not have to be rewritten in ten years or in this century.[1]

But such a method of investigation is a little too plodding for some of our more advanced thinkers in history. They mean by imagination only too often the construction of "a working hypothesis"—a scheme of cause and effect into which the facts can be somehow squeezed and made to do service even though

[1] This paragraph and several that follow are taken with some alterations from a paper of mine read at the St. Louis Exposition, and afterward published in the proceedings of the congress vol. 3, p. 577 *et seq.*

the machinery creaks a bit in the working. Professor Furtwängler, for example, a more brilliant and startling archæologist than Dr. Waldstein, in his learned volume on the "Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture," has no difficulty whatever in pointing out to us the exact style of Pheidias—something about which we thought our information a trifle hazy. But the professor explains it very easily by supposing a case. He has an hypothesis and the hypothesis is the thing. Whether it wrecks probability or Pheidias himself is of small matter, provided he proves his case. He tells us to start with that there were countless copies of Greek marbles made *in* Rome and *for* Rome, and that the works of Pheidias must certainly have been among the copied. Assumption number one. We have none of the Greek originals by Pheidias that we can point out with certainty, but that is unimportant. All that is necessary to understand his style and method is to read him in the Latin translation, study him in the Roman copies. Assumption number two, resting upon assumption number one. Some people of limited culture might have difficulty in picking out these copies, but Professor Furtwängler, who

knows about copies, variants, and replicas, has no trouble in laying his hand upon these various marbles in the European museums. Assumption number three, or rather a substitution of Professor Furtwängler's judgment for the fact. He begins by picking out the Lemnian Venus as the type, and ends by making every Roman marble in Europe of similar workmanship bear witness and confirmation to it. And there you have the style of Pheidias proved to an eyelash. Of course, this is a mere hypothesis. If one link in the chain is faulty or lacking the whole falls to the ground. The proof is insufficient, though the suggestion of the theory is stimulating and really illuminating.

It is a pleasant pastime, no doubt, for archæologists to blow these brilliant soap bubbles, for they blow large numbers of them and then go away leaving them floating in the air—to burst of their own weakness. But there is evil in the practice for the student of history. He is young, perhaps, and accepts the hypothesis as proven fact. Possibly he finds it accepted by others and written down as history. It is the kind of history, to be sure, that has to be rewritten every ten years; but

then it confuses and misleads for a time. The more sober-minded regret that such history ever finds acceptance not only because it must be ultimately rejected, but because much learning and research put into it are not placed to the best advantage and do not count for what they should. No one can gainsay the knowledge and the insight of Professor Furtwängler. The only pity is that they were not used to establish some plain record of fact that would not have to be rewritten. Fancy in history is entertaining, but one does not go to history for entertainment. Neither does one go there to be misled.

One feels some regret of this sort in the work of Mr. Berenson, who beyond a doubt knows more about Italian painting than any of our living writers. He has been indefatigable in research and some of his conclusions have thrown much light on the history of art; but on the other hand, some of his fanciful quips have led astray and confused. That imagination, without which no historian's equipment is complete, seems to be leading many of our connoisseurs into strange lands and skies. Mr. Berenson is affected by it just as the others, but he is not blinded by it,

for he frankly confesses that "Method interests me more than results, the functioning of the mind much more than the ephemeral object of functioning." In other words he is more interested in whether his hypothesis will work out than in the facts which constitute history. And so on occasion he "functions" people and things into existence that never were, and distributes canvases around to various masters and pupils, perhaps unconsciously, that they may help out the hypothesis. There is the familiar and oft-quoted case of Amico di Sandro by way of illustration. It is worth rehearsing.

Years ago it was quite apparent to the students of history wandering in European galleries that there were a number of fifteenth-century Florentine pictures, variously attributed in the different galleries to Botticelli, Filippo Lippi, Filippino, and the "Florentine School" in general, that had perhaps a common origin. A family likeness ran through them all and it was generally believed that some one studio in Florence had sent them forth. Mr. Berenson took hold of them, subjected them to investigation, and showed their points of resemblance quite conclusively. It

was a fine clearing up of a dubious lot of pictures, done skilfully and with knowledge. His conclusion was that they had all been done by one hand, and that the painter of them was an unknown and a forgotten master, a contemporary perhaps of Botticelli. Had he rested there no one could have found fault with his mental functioning or his imagination or his treatment of the facts. It was a suggestive hypothesis, a possibility, a something to be borne in mind and perhaps studied for confirmation. But Mr. Berenson did not stop there; he went a step further. He ventured, half in jest and half in earnest, to give this unknown painter a name, a manufactured name, Amico di Sandro—that is the friend or companion in art of Sandro Botticelli. He not only constructed and named this painter and crowded him into the Florentine school; but he actually made him influence Filippino in order to account for something in Filippino's work not traceable to his reputed master, Botticelli!

Of course this touch of audacity is held by Mr. Berenson's following to be clever, even inspired in method. It is mental functioning at its best; but who shall claim that it is pro-

ductive of history? The humor of it has something French about it and causes in the flippant a smile; but how does it help out the tale of facts to which the science of connoisseurship is said to be devoted? People ask what harm it does—this jest spoken as a true word? And the answer is that Amico di Sandro has passed into the minor histories, and is in danger of final adoption as a real personality. At best it will take many years before that man of straw is finally removed from the pathway and in the meantime it is something over which the unwary stumble. The creation of such an homunculus does not exemplify the science of the history of art so much as the methods of modern connoisseurship. Such "functioning" is not scientific in the true sense, but purely speculative, not to say fanciful; though one may admit that it is interesting, and, in its incidental information, most instructive.

Amico di Sandro is merely an incident, a paragraph in history; and yet to-day whole volumes are sometimes written in a similar vein, with greater assumptions, and with far more lame, blind, and halt conclusions. The higher criticism in art is more rampant now

than ever was Biblical criticism as exemplified in the Rainbow Bible. Painters long dead and forgotten are resurrected, galvanized into life, or reconstructed by the imagination; and panels and altar-pieces are tossed about from painter to painter like balls in a tennis court. If an icthyologist can reconstruct a fish from a single bone, what prevents an archæologist from reconstructing the life of a painter from his pictures? There are, for instance, only two or three bones left to us in the life of Rembrandt, but when properly put together by the aid of the connoisseur's imagination they may produce something startling. We know nothing of importance about Rembrandt's youth, family, or bringing up; but here is a picture by him out of which we may be able to wring some new facts. From its style it was evidently painted when he was a young man. It shows the portrait of a woman past middle life. Rembrandt being a poor young man could not afford to hire sitters or models, and, therefore, it is very probable that he painted the members of his own family. This is his mother. She holds a book in her hand. It is no doubt the Bible because other books were scarce in those days. From the fact that

it is a Bible we may infer that Rembrandt's mother was a religious woman. Ergo: she must have brought Rembrandt up in the faith! And that, you see, accounts for his painting so many religious pictures!

Such a summary of an argument seems like burlesque, or at least caricature, but on the contrary it is the kind of reasoning carried on in one of the most recent and most important lives of Rembrandt. It is the "imaginative" way of writing history sacred to the modern historian. And a very interesting way it is, to be sure. You can build almost any sort of life you please, as you would a house of cards, and perhaps one will have as little substance as the other, though it may last longer. Both have their day and go their way. For a time the hypothesis—the distorted biography—has its acceptance, and helps to mix up and confuse. On what other score than this Rembrandt book, or its like, can we explain the Vienna Gallery cataloguing one of his portraits as "Rembrandt's Mother" or the Berlin Gallery catalogue giving "Hendrickje Stoffels" as the subject of another one of his portraits? There is not a scrap of evidence that would be ac-

cepted in a police court for either title. We have no facts or d.rect knowledge about the looks of either Rembrandt's mother or his mistress. But the imagination of the connoisseur can supply the missing material. All you need to do is to dismiss documents and tradition and study the canvas itself as you might a dumb animal or a plant, and after a time it will give up its secrets, unbosom itself of its maker. And this is what is sometimes called scientific art history. Some of it might have hard work passing muster as historical romance.

In reading the history of art, as it is written, one sometimes sighs for a good book on the "Value of Human Testimony." And a companion volume on "What is Logic?" They should be placed in the hands of every historian and studied as the law and the gospel. It is necessary, of course, that the connoisseur-writer should know what is a copy, what is an original, what is a variant, what is a forgery; but it is also necessary that he should know what is common-sense. It is not, for instance, common-sense, when gathering evidence, to cast out all documents about pictures simply because some of them have been misleading

or erroneous. A Raphael contract or agreement to paint a "Hercules and the Nemean Lion" may be worthless because the agreement was never carried out, but a Raphael agreement for a "School of Athens" would be excellent evidence because the agreement *was* carried out. To be sure, a document may point to a certain altar-piece, which was afterward stolen and a copy quietly put in its place; and in such a case criticism is justified in saying, from the picture itself, that it is a copy and not the original! But the agreement of Correggio to paint the "Holy Night," now in the Dresden Gallery, is extant, and is good corroborative proof of the Dresden picture having been painted by Correggio. True enough, documents have been forged, and so also have signatures but there are true documents as there are true signatures, and either or both of them may be trustworthy evidence. The question of probability comes in just here. There is nothing inherently improbable about the inscription on the St. Bavon altar-piece to the effect that Hubert van Eyck began it and Jan van Eyck finished it. If it were a lie it is not conceivable that it would have been tolerated there in the first

place. It has always been accepted as a true statement until the recent exhibition of early Flemish art at Bruges gave the connoisseurs a chance to formulate doubts and spin theories. The St. Bavon altar-piece, as attributed, failed to support the theories and, of course, the theories could not be in error; it was the altar-piece that was wrong.[1] Then followed slur and innuendo, the glance askance, and the "I could an' I would," all because the connoisseurs wanted to reconstruct the lost personality of Hubert van Eyck by taking away from the established personality of Jan van Eyck. In fact the extravagance of the newer criticism has never been so patently exemplified as in the recent attempts at rewriting the history of the early Flemings. The writers have put down a long series of unsupported guesses and asked their acceptance as facts, ignoring all the traditions and histories of the past, with signatures and inscriptions, as mere documentary rubbish of no importance.

Without doubt signatures, documents, an-

[1] Albrecht Dürer saw it in 1521 and wrote of it as "Jan van Eyck's picture." He continues: "It is a most precious painting, full of thought, and the Eve, Mary and God the Father are specially good." (Moore's *Albert Dürer*, p. 155.)

cient records, traditions need support by the internal evidence of the work itself. The mere tale as told, whether it comes from Lucian or Vasari, is not to be trusted implicitly. It may be only corroborative proof. It needs confirmation but is nevertheless an aid to conviction. It cannot be tossed aside as worthless nor yet again be used as a skeleton-key to unlock any door. That Pliny records the making of a Venus by Skopas is no proof whatever that a Venus found in the ruins of Rome is a copy or a variant of the Skopas marble. At that rate documents could be made to prove anything you pleased. If, on the contrary, Vasari says that Giorgione was a pupil of Bellini and this is uncontradicted by other testimony, it is to be believed, even though Giorgione showed no trace of the Bellini shop in his work. Bastien-Lepage did not show Cabanel nor did Whistler show Gleyre, but each was a pupil of each as stated.

The chronicle has been treated as "old woman's gossip" or "final truth" just as the historian using it chose to regard it or needed it in his theory; but it is unbelievable that its value has been properly estimated in either case. Much of what the old chroniclers

have put down may be treated lightly. The threadbare stories about Dædalus, the first sculptor of Greece, who carved the gods so true to life that they had to be bound with ropes to keep them from walking away, about Zeuxis deceiving the birds with his painted grapes, and Parrhasius deceiving Zeuxis with his painted curtain are merely pleasant nonsense that no one believes. Quite useless, as well as improbable, too, are many tales from Vasari—that story, for instance, retold from Ghiberti, of Giotto, the sheep-boy, being discovered by Cimabue drawing sheep on a stone, and the old painter standing aghast at the excellence of the drawing. The story is of small importance, whether fact or fiction; but we have a strong inducement to doubt it because we have Giotto's sheep preserved to us on the wall of the Arena Chapel in Padua. They are miserable little wooden sheep, out of a toy Noah's ark; and not even a Byzantine-trained painter, such as Cimabue, could have been staggered by them. On the contrary, had the story read that Giotto was a donkey-boy, and was discovered by Cimabue drawing his donkey, it would be equally unimportant, perhaps, but certainly more believable; for

we have Giotto's donkey in the "Flight into Egypt" in that same Arena Chapel, and a very excellent donkey it is, too. It might easily enough have astonished Cimabue, for it is astonishing to artists of greater learning at the present day.

Even tradition handed down from mouth to mouth is not a thing to be lightly set aside, as the higher critics are wont to do. It is often the very foundation of the facts. Traditional accounts of Columbus, of Charles V, of Napoleon—their methods of work, their conversation, their personal appearance—may all be acceptable. Just so with traditions about art works—who the builder of the Great Pyramid at Gizeh, whence the brass horses of San Marco at Venice, when and how the sculptured façades of Amiens or Rheims. If all the history of the Sistine Chapel were lost the tradition that Michael Angelo painted the ceiling would still be believable. The frescos themselves would corroborate it.

The frescos themselves! Ay: there's the rub. For it cannot be denied that tradition, documents, hearsay, and even the tales of the annalists, are not exactly the most direct or the best evidence. To repeat, they are cor-

roborative rather than *prima facie*. They may point out the picture or the marble, but the work itself must speak and confirm its identity. There the higher criticism in art is well based and deserving of serious consideration. Yet just because the analysis of the picture itself is the most entertaining, and perhaps the most certain, of all methods it is the one that is the oftenest used and the oftenest put in peril. It is so easy to determine, almost at a glance, the national and provincial characteristics of a work—so easy to locate it in its century, its school, its town, almost its workshop—that its history and authorship are often jumped at with equal ease and haste. But, as I have said, the difficulty in identification is enormously increased as the hunt draws to a close. When the style, technique, type, mannerisms, and characteristics of an altarpiece are so marked that you locate it in the workshop of a master at Venice or Milan or Ferrara your search has really begun anew. You are now confronted with the possibilities of pupils, imitators, copyists, and forgers. Great caution is necessary, and in the end the final and conclusive test may not be used at all. I mean the appeal to the quality of the

picture. It is often omitted entirely, because considered unscientific. It brings in the individuality of the artist, and the spirit and feeling of his work, which is not higher criticism but last century's method of criticism. With quality omitted from the case, and tradition, documentation and record cast out as worthless, the authenticity of the altar-piece hangs solely on its internal evidence. This is so liable to misinterpretation, so susceptible of misrepresentation, that it cannot be accounted as always conclusive. It is hypothetical, problematical.

So it may be surmised that with all the newer and higher criticism has taught us in the study of works of art as human documents, there is still room for doubt and cause for caution. And these inevitably centre about extravagant theories and impossible hypotheses. The very imagination, which is accounted a virtue in the historian, has by its continuous abuse among the smaller folk become little short of a vice. By its employment the history of the old masters has become less of a fact and more of a fiction until now people scarcely know what to believe about the Van Eycks or Giorgione, about Verrocchio or the

della Robbias. Scepticism is bred of this confusion, and I know no more discouraging state of mind than that. When a person knows not what to believe and doubts everything, he sometimes thinks that at least he is scientific; but in reality he is only unhappy.

But is there no other side to the shield? Is all the critical history of the time so warped that there is no straight edge about it? Oh no. There is plenty of sane and safe history written to-day, though perhaps it does not attract the notice that it should. It is more spectacular and "fetching" to do something ultra, to ride a hobby, or chase a theory, or knock off something that is inspired, than to write a plain unvarnished tale. The connoisseur who oversets all our previous conceptions by denying everything in favor of some new theory is bound to attract more attention than the conservative who merely adds his stone to the cairn. But even the most erratic connoisseur brings some truth and knowledge in his pack. He is sound in spots. And it is worth noting that he is always the severest critic of his brother critics. Nothing so provokes him as the unsustained efforts of other workers in the vineyard. So that the tendency of histori-

cal criticism is to correct itself, to grow more rational as it grows in years and experience. There will be less twisting of facts to suit a theory, less of subjective imagination and mental functioning, as the body of criticism becomes better established. The facts are the things and they should be stated as they are and the reader allowed to draw his own conclusions. It is the affair of the historian, first and foremost, to get at the truth: it is not, or should not be, his affair to be spinning theories of his own or forever trying to put some other person's theory in the wrong. He should not be an advocate trying, by contorted statement and specious argument, to establish the case for some crack-brained master or wonderful masterpiece that he has exhumed from the past. On the contrary he should be an unbiassed investigator and judge, trying to establish the truth though the findings should shake his particular idol from its pedestal.

Of course, most of the hypotheses of the connoisseurs and historians will pass away and be forgotten. They have done more to unsettle, perhaps, than to convince. But the historic materials gathered for their exploitation have been wonderfully informing, and they will un-

doubtedly be used as the basis of a truer development of history hereafter. Then, too, there is almost sure to be a reaction against theorizing and in favor of the plain assembling of facts. Some of the more recent monographs and studies seem to point that way. In them one seems to feel the disposition to get at the truth without prejudice or bias, for there is an absence of dogmatic utterances and hair-splitting hypotheses. That, it seems, is as it should be. If there is anything very obvious or noteworthy about the man or his work or his period the facts will all point to it; if there is not, all the argument in the world will fail to convince. In fact, argument often defeats its own ends. There is something radically wrong with the theory that has to be beaten into you through five hundred pages. It is too vehement in protestation.

Then, too, our connoisseurs and historians may some day conclude that it is worth while paying some attention to the art history of their own time, as Vasari, or Palomino, or even the American Dunlap, did before them. Neither our literature nor our art is so excellent as that of the past, perhaps; but at least it has the merit of being different. It is neither despic-

able nor negligible though the higher criticism seems disposed both to sneer at it and neglect it. That is quite in keeping with the modern spirit. It likes nothing of its own time. Its art, like its wines, must be of ancient vintage. A mania for things old is upon us, and, of course, things new receive slight consideration or attention. How deep-seated that mania is, and how deadening to any original impulse in art it may become, are worthy not only of inquiry but of reflection. Art never came out of a nation that lacked faith in itself. All the culture and cosmopolitanism in the world will not take the place of self-conviction and native impulse. We shall find the illustration of it here in America where just now we are striving to be almost anything or everything except something American.

CHAPTER VI

ART APPRECIATION

When the American colonies fulminated the Declaration of Independence, and with fixed bayonets started upon an independent career, they at least showed confidence in themselves. They had been dangling from the British apron-string for many years and it required some courage of conviction to cut the binding tie. Such courage was justified, though the results were not immediately apparent, for the first hundred years of the republic were narrow, circumscribed, and not too intelligent years. But the nation believed in itself, supported itself, defended itself. It stood up sturdily and had little to do with other nationalities. It planted and watered and gathered the increase, it dug and hewed and built, it legislated and elected and inaugurated, it wrote and carved and painted; and in almost every one of these activities, whether the result was good or bad, at least it was original—the people's very own.

We hardly realize at the present time just what the national isolation was in the early days, or how, within the country itself, certain settlements were cut off from other settlements. When in the first quarter of the nineteenth century people went over the Alleghanies into Kentucky and Illinois, they put fortitude in their purse, for no twenty-four-hour train whirled them out or brought them back. They went by wagon-train and river-boat, and, once there, they did not soon return. They were cut off from their depot of supplies respecting almost every commodity. If they wanted a hat or a coat, a wagon or a gun, a plough or an axe, they did not telephone East and have one sent out the next day by express; but sat down and made it by their wits from the surrounding materials. Every one was his own hunter, farmer, woodsman, and craftsman. The carpenter became the architect, the stone-mason the sculptor; and the house-and-sign painter, after making his own colors, brushes, and panels, frequently painted his neighbors' portraits in his own fashion, without precedent, tradition, or previous technical education. Each one was self-reliant from necessity. He did things in an individual way because he had

not the temptation of any other person's example. Oftentimes the wonder was, not that the product was so very good in itself, but that the producer was able to do it at all. And oftentimes, again, it is astonishing, what character, force, and real artistic worth lie in this native work. The Harding "craze" in New England was perhaps over-enthusiasm, but it was not madness. Many of his portraits are rude in technique but excellent in truth and sincerity. There was no great furore in the more conservative New York over Brown, the sculptor; but his "Washington," in Union Square—the first equestrian statue ever cast in the United States—speaks in no uncertain tones, defying any of the Parisian moderns to better it. And in that same period there was many a city hall and church and college building put up that in dignity, sobriety, and proportion more than hold their own with the Beaux-Arts structures of to-day.

But it was not long before the scholar—the person of skill and style and manner—made his appearance in the arts. The Storys trailed away to Italy and learned from the marbles of Bernini and Canova how to pose and carve in stone the romantic characters of history.

They sent them back to the United States and had the satisfaction of seeing people grow sad-eyed over such marble dolls as "Zenobia" and "Cleopatra." The Richardsons gathered up medieval architecture, and were presently building churches and public buildings with Romanesque walls and towers which were no more called for by American needs or life or light than so much Indian temple or Chinese pagoda. And the Hunts came back with French painting in their kit, or worse yet, Munich or Düsseldorf methods, and set up studios to teach us that we ourselves were nothing in painting, presumably never could be anything, and that the best thing for us to do was to tag after Couture or Millet or Piloty or Kaulbach.

In 1876, with the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, a first glimpse of foreign art came to many of our people. Its effect was immediate. Our pictures were written down as worthless, our methods were crude and silly, our pioneers in the arts a group of ignorant and purblind moles. Everything the foreigners did was so much better than anything we could do that there was only one course open to us—to follow their example. Art after

all was wider than race or nationality. It was universal. And method could or should be cosmopolitan—that is the gathered force of the best traditions derived from any and all sources. What wonder then that group after group of would-be architects, sculptors, and painters went out from America immediately following the awakening, went over to Europe to study and travel and gather wherever and however they could.

The newly developed facilities of transportation enabled our students to reach Europe easily; and, after a few years, the same facilities just as easily brought them home, loaded with foreign ideas, teachings, and methods. A new art propaganda was soon established here by the returned students, and speedily accepted. Beaux-Arts buildings began to crop up in the cities; the blue-frocked and wooden-shoed peasantry of France, with Concarneau streets and Seine landscapes, came to dot the exhibitions of the art societies; and allegorical figures, style Paul Dubois, or animals, style Barye, or equestrian statues, style Frémiet, began to show in our public parks. But the deluge did not arrive until some years later. When our millionaires came into their own,

and Europe found we had more money than we knew what to do with, then began the unloading at our doors of the art plunder of all creation. Almost every country of the globe sent its quota. England, France, Holland, Italy, even Asia and the further islands, were soon supplying us with the luxurious things of life—pictures, marbles, bronzes, rugs, tapestries, porcelains, furniture, fireplaces, ceilings. Almost anything that was old, and made elsewhere than in America, was eagerly accepted and paid for at astonishing prices. When the stock of originals ran low, as was inevitable, the canny tradesmen began supplying copies, and even forgeries. But this in no way lessened the demand, though exposure followed exposure. The people were daft over "antiques" and things of foreign manufacture. They are still in that silly state. With many nothing but what is imported need apply. The importer flatters us by saying that we know a good thing when we see it, or perhaps we flatter ourselves with some such cheaply expressed belief.

Now during all this time and even down to the present moment America has preserved its independence and self-reliance in certain de-

partments. We do not accept foreign ideas about bridge-making or cotton-growing or corn raising. We know our own mind in the matter of irrigation or railroading or manufacturing; and we are not disposed to accept any other mind in matters of government or economics or general education. In the every-day affairs of living we still hold to our own methods, and are abundantly successful. Where we grow weak-kneed, with a tendency toward kneeling, is in social life, in manners and customs, and above all in the arts. In the early days of the republic, as we have premised, the arts were harsh in method but at least honest and self-respecting. Now method has become, even in native hands, facile, ductile, slippery, and uncertain, having been gathered up from all creation and blended into a cosmopolitan limpidity or insipidity as forceless as it is insincere. In matter we no longer trust ourselves, but accept an alien point of view. And like all borrowers, of course, we borrow the wrong things and imitate the defects rather than the qualities of foreign art. As a result the borrowed product is inappropriate, insignificant, wholly inexpressive of our time, our people, or our civilization. It neither repre-

sents nor fulfils; it is an imported hybrid—something not grown from our soil nor native to our climate.

The borrowings of the architects are perhaps as graceless as any class in the country. It would seem as though the majority of them went abroad, not to study planning and construction so much as to get a portfolio of photographs of European buildings which could be reproduced or "adapted" to American use. Certainly they have laid violent hands on whatever has pleased them there and reproduced it here without preface or apology, and without, in many cases, a sense of propriety or a particle of humor. They are not able to see the grotesque in a Roman arch changed into a clearing-house, or a Veronese council-hall made to do service as a printing-shop, or a Greek temple turned into a bull-and-bear pit where brokers may roar the prices of their stocks. What sense of fitness is there in a dry-goods store that imitates a Moorish palace, or a railway station that resembles a temple of justice, or an apartment-house that looks like the square tower of an English cathedral? In what way do such things represent American life, or stand for American art,

or best subserve an American purpose? New York, to go no farther in the country, is filled with barbarities of taste, atrocities of style, that have no sanity in them. Many of them are, to be sure, blatant advertisements of business ventures in which the architects have not had their own way; but many of them are architectural attempts to graft the old on the new, and are mere caterings to the taste for foreign art.

It is astonishing the things that are done in the name of French or Italian or Greek architecture or under the guise of a Renaissance or Gothic or Classic period. Again, what has a Riccardi palace to do with the requirements of a company of silverware merchants on Fifth Avenue, or an ancient château of France with a dwelling-house for Americans on the same curb line? Something "very old," or its equivalent in style, seems required. So fond are we of antiquity that we even go back and borrow from the art of our own colonial period. And, of course, we reproduce its limitations and petty mannerisms. This is particularly true of dwelling-houses, in town or out of it. If it is a brick house that is to be constructed, then the architect has made at great

expense irregular, badly burnt, two-by-four bricks, he designs cramped little windows with panes the size of one's hand; and puts in picturesque foundation stones, undressed and moss-grown, gathered from the neighboring counties. He has not enough imagination to know that the colonial builders would have been delighted had their machinery been able to turn out a smooth, even, eight-inch brick and clear, large plate-glass, such as we have to-day; and that had there been clean-dressed blocks of stone at hand they would have been glad to use them in the foundations. They took the field stones because they were cheaper and required no carriage to their destination. Recently a young man, who was declared by his friends to be "a person of taste," told me of his worries with a country house he was building at G——. It seems that the old houses, built there more than a hundred years ago, had sags in the roof about the gables, and were uneven in the sky-lines. He wanted his master-carpenter to repeat those crimps in the new roof, and the carpenter was such a savage that he wanted to build the roof and gable-lines straight and true! And the stupid stone-mason wanted to rub the moss and lichens off

of his carefully selected field stones! He said nothing about his pergola, but it cannot be doubted that he had one at the side of the house, and that the posts were monolithic columns of polished granite or white marble. The pergolas in southern Italy being built of stone rubble and coated with whitewash, because of the lack of available joists and scantling, it is quite natural that the American should seek to outdo the Italian by having solid cylinders of stone put in to uphold a— vine!

People with such refined feeling for the flavor of antiquity can have but slight sympathy with modern things. Our recent country houses, of which we have some reason to be proud, not only because they are largely of our own invention, but because they are substantial, serviceable, and appropriate, are not to their taste. In reality the only thing wrong with many of them is that they are in good repair. A hundred or more years hence, when the walls are "out of plumb" and the roofs leak, there will be plenty of Bunthornes to grow lachrymose over them. And in the city what word of good report can one find for our only original architectural creation, the sky-

scraper? Everybody talks sentimentally about the City Hall and Old Trinity, and between gulps of emotion protests the beauty of Fraunce's Tavern and the romance of the cheese-box Aquarium. Even such palpable borrowings from Europe as the new Public Library, or the Pennsylvania Railroad Station, are acclaimed with enthusiasm as oases in the desert of steel, stone, and brick. But who acclaims or declaims anything favorable to the sky-scraper? Almost every one flings his epithet at it because it is big and new, and not like anything else ever known in the history of architecture.

But what is wrong with the sky-scraper? Has it any vice save its novelty, its originality? It was started as an expedient to utilize valuable ground in the congested parts of cities, to increase floor space by increasing the height of the building, also to increase revenue and thus meet tax assessments and interest upon invested capital. In this it was successful; and being put forth honestly and without pretence as a business necessity, its designers builded better than they knew. For, perhaps unconsciously, they developed a new building principle and, I am disposed to think, a new style

of architecture. The Egyptian and the Greek had used the upright and the cross-piece as a child builds a block house. The Roman had bevelled the blocks and keyed them in an arch; the Goth had raised them in pointed windows and roofs, and sustained the outward-pushing walls by piles of buttressed blocks. None of them had used anything that held the blocks together or kept the building from falling apart by settlings of the foundations. They were all of them more or less agglomerations of loose stones. The sky-scraper is the first structure wherein steel is used and the frame of uprights and cross-beams is riveted together by girders and stays so that it cannot get away or settle or warp. The structure is brought together as a solid whole and is a self-supporting, practically indestructible unit. The outside walls of brick or stone are merely weather shields and support nothing. Everything is carried by the steel frame, and all the strains upon the frame are so adjusted that they carry downward through the steel pillars and are finally brought to bear upon the stone foundations.

Here is not only new construction but a new building principle. And why not also a new

architectural style? To decry it because it is neither classic nor romantic, nor any other style that ever was, is to repeat the denunciation of innovation that has always been since the world began. Wherein or how is it "hideous"—to quote the common expression? Thirty years ago they used the same word in connection with the Brooklyn Bridge. But both the bridge and the tall building are sane in proportion, in composition, in sky-lines, in use. Moreover, they are the most picturesque features of the new city, and will doubtless be so regarded by the coming generation. More than once in our nation-building the useful inventions of the pioneers have been applauded as art by their grandchildren. Just now we are perhaps too close to the sky-scraper to see anything but its commercialism. With the fever of the antique burning in our brain we are in no state to appreciate anything so distinctly modern, original, and useful. Even the architects of the steel structures were at first disposed to be apologetic and to plan the new buildings on the platform-column-and-portico principle of the antique. Greek temples, Venetian palaces, and Gothic town-halls were elongated, pulled out into twenty stories,

and made to resemble in external features some of the memorable buildings of Europe. But this was a mistaken idea, and not until the architects began with something distinctly their own—a space-saving building with upright walls, neither receding nor advancing from the curb line—was the sky-scraper a success. And success it must be written down—the one architectural triumph of our people of which the future will be proud. And that, not only because it is our own, but because it is characteristic art that justifies itself in use and purpose.

It is not, however, with the sky-scraper, the bridge, the factory, or the farm that popular notions about art are usually concerned. Such distinctly American features are accounted ugly, possibly because they are very plain and very necessary. Art with us, it seems, is considered a matter of the house and the apartment, of the museum and the gallery, of the park and the plaza—something that belongs to social, municipal, or academic life and has little to do with use. At least this notion seems apparent in the furnishing of the average dwelling, in town or out of it. Everything seems planned more for looks than for service.

The furniture is often imported and, whether genuine or forged, is usually too weak in the legs to bear any weight; the rugs, imported again, are of a quality too precious to be trod upon; the musical instruments are hung on the wall and cannot be used; the undefiled porcelains are in glass cases and never hold anything; the books, glass-cased again, are all beautifully bound but not to be read; the portières on the doors, the tapestries on the walls, that have cost a fortune, are not even useful because inappropriate and meaningless in such surroundings; and the $129,000 Turner or the $125,000 Hals are not decorative for they make spots on the tapestries and fail to keep their places.

What else could be expected! None of these things are ours, or represent us, or have anything in common with us but a quarrel. What pertinence has a Rembrandt portrait in the dining-room of a New York stock-broker or a carved Renaissance door-way or mantel-piece in the drawing-room of a Pittsburg steel manufacturer? When the Venetians wanted porphyry columns for San Marco they took them from the buildings in and about Constantinople because they had no

stone of their own, and bringing stone from the Alps across the marshes was a mighty labor. They took by chance more columns than they needed and the ones left over were placed in front of the main façade of San Marco to get rid of them. But what excuse or rhyme or reason is there for the American following of that Venetian idiosyncrasy, in standing loose columns of old stone or gilded wood around the fireplace of a Fifth Avenue drawing-room? It was to be expected of a foolish jackdaw that he should despise his own plumage and seek to enliven it by adding a peacock's feather to his tail; but how does an intelligent people permit itself such a patent absurdity?

And the unending discussion and gossip about Renaissance art! It spreads from the antique shops and the dealer's store to the drawing-room and the dinner-table; it floats in from the museum and the lecture platform, it breaks out in the daily press and the monthly magazines, and it is served up at the clubs and the theatres. Critics and connoisseurs give appreciations of it before pink-tea audiences, museums give exhibitions of it, auction-rooms and dealers' shops have sales of

it. Every one is afraid some fine shade of it will get away unseen or unfelt. In the summer season thousands of our people study it in the Vatican, absorb it in the churches, and chase it through the galleries of Italy. What eyes they have for old palaces with towers askew, for sagging bridges and wharves, for quaint door-knockers and picturesque chimney-pots! They revere antiquity and have a standing quarrel with the native because he does not do likewise. The Roman who wishes to improve the city where he lives and objects to its being regarded as a mere museum and he himself as a mummy in a glass case is said to be a savage, a descendant of the old invading Goths; the Venetian who wants a little more rapid transit than a gondola affords, and puts a motor boat on the Grand Canal, is an unspeakable degenerate. What better could either or any of them do than live for the past? What right has Italy with such a history to be modern?

Was there ever before such a pother about art—and most of it about somebody else's art? One hears the name of Corot twenty times to Homer Martin's once, of Rembrandt fifty times to Winslow Homer's once, of Frans Hals a hundred times to Gilbert Stuart's once. Great

names, and great art that of Corot, Rembrandt, and Hals; but they are not our names, nor our people, nor our art. They belong in our museums, but not in our homes or in our lives. They are not only foreign to our time and people but in their influence they tend to choke out contemporary originality. It is impossible for all this talk about ancient art to be in the air without touching and affecting any and every endeavor. The furniture manufacturer will eventually give the public what it wants. If the demand is for colonial, or Louis Seize, or old Spanish chairs and tables he will produce them. The tapestry man will imitate the Gobelins, the rug man the Daghestan patterns, the glass man will mould or blow you Bohemian or old Venetian ware to order. English quartered oak from Michigan, Florentine hangings from Paterson, Italian marbles from Vermont, Renaissance bronzes from Boston—you can have any style you please, except the American. Step into a wall-paper establishment, a silk store, a millinery shop, or a tailoring concern, and immediately there is talk about the latest imported styles of goods. Try the office of an architect, a silversmith, or a decorator and you will meet with the same

thing. The only originality apparent is in persistent imitation.

And how or why should the native painter be supposed bullet-proof against such influences? If all the world is talking about the style of Mauve or Manet, what is the use of thrusting forward the style of Smith or Brown? Unconsciously, no doubt, the Smiths and Browns drift into the fashionable way of doing things. At one time, perhaps, the Barbizon painters are in the ascendant. The collectors buy them, the museums exhibit them, every one talks about them. Presently the yearly exhibitions take on a Barbizon look. There are landscapes like those of Rousseau and Dupré, cattle and sheep like those of Troyon, laborers and mill-hands like the peasants of Millet. In a few years fashion has changed and Monet and *plein air* are the vogue. Directly the exhibition walls grow vivid with primary colors applied in points and spots. Every other picture is a strain after sunlight, and every other palette is keyed up with prismatic hues. Opalescent air, blue shadows, purple trees, even lilac cows—the exaggerations of impressionism—are everywhere in evidence. A few years more and fashion has again shifted, and now it fan-

cies something just the opposite of Monetism. It likes the smoky atmosphere of Carrière and goes mad over the subtle hues of Whistler. Once more the new crop of Smiths and Browns responds by pitching its pictures in a dull key of light; and the exhibition walls grow dark with brown-fiddle and old gray tones of color, with "notes" and "nocturnes" and "arrangements," with sketches and studies and unfinished pictures.

The painters follow the eccentricities of Monet and Whistler, forgetting or overlooking their decided merits, and the sculptors pay the same doubtful compliment of imitation to Rodin. At one time it was Dubois or Falguière that held their allegiance, but now it is Rodin—Rodin, a genius but for his limitations. Of course the limitations are the features that his American followers love the best and try the hardest to reproduce. The most marked of these is his apparent inability to finish anything, to group anything, to compose anything. He does scraps and bits that give hints of power, and promises of great things that are not fulfilled. His sketch in stone—a limitation imposed originally upon Michael Angelo—is the very thing his followers would

accept. The result is the half-finished marble in the exhibitions—a back heaving out of the block, a head coming out of a formless body, a leg struggling with its matrix of stone. Mannerisms again. Even the students in the art schools are taught to admire them in the great sculptures and painters, or at least the mannerism or the method of an old master is about the only thing the student succeeds in copying, which is in effect the same thing. Any method seems better worth following than our own.

By that I mean that though there is much talk in the leagues and schools about "originality" and "self-assertion" and "individual view" there is too little practical demonstration of it. The antique class draws from the cast—a cast usually of a "classic" Greek or Roman, attitudinized on one leg or with a hip thrown up in graceful self-consciousness—and thereby gains the knowledge of how to pose the model after the Greek manner. The painting class works from the nude model—posed again, perhaps, as Ajax defying the lightning—which possibly enables it to comprehend the living people of our day as they appear clothed and in their right mind. As

far removed from reality as such examples are, they might not be ineffective if the classes were actually made to draw, and to keep on drawing. That is the grammar of painting and should be learned by heart down to the slightest inflection or exception. But unfortunately the method pursued soon puts a broad brush in the student's hand instead of a piece of coal and he is told to paint—paint like Frans Hals or Velasquez! Here is the foreign model once more. And such a model! To ask an exceedingly minor poet to write like Shakespeare or Homer, or a college freshman to speak like Burke or Daniel Webster, would not be more absurd. Velasquez drew and painted for many years with a minute pencil and a tight brush, and it was just because he did so that he was afterward able to draw easily with a loose brush; but the modern student need not go through that drudgery. He can begin where Velasquez left off. Frans Hals never could draw as well as Velasquez, never had his calm poise and certain hand; but he could slash about on canvas with a large brush sometimes with great effect and sometimes with a wealth of bad drawing quite astonishing. The bad drawing of draperies and extremities, and

the heaping up occasionally of ineffectual paint being Hals mannerisms, there is no reason why the student should not acquire them. As a matter of fact he does. The master who presides applauds Hals's "breadth of handling" as he does "the certain touch" of Velasquez; but he will not see that these qualities are as the rod of Aaron that turns into a serpent in the hands of the uninspired. He could not pick out better painters or worse models for imitation than those two men.

So it is that the student in the school does not learn to draw or paint in the most effective or practical way. It is only after years of forgetting what he learned there that perhaps he finally, through severe work, gets on his feet and realizes that Hals and Velasquez are not for him, that he is an American of the West, a modern of the moderns, and that he is to give some expression of himself, his time, and his people in his art if it is to be vital or significant in any way. What have Sargent or Whistler or John La Farge to do with Velasquez or Manet or Delacroix? They had to forget all that before they became themselves. The student of sculpture is in the same condition. He models figures like Rodin's or groups

like Dalou's, but it takes him years before he throws such influences behind him and at last produces a Sherman or a Lincoln. Even the Beaux-Arts architect has been known to forget and to forsake

> "—his low-vaulted past
> And let each new temple nobler than the last
> Shut him from heaven with a dome more vast."

He has risen to originality more than once, not by adapting this or that style, but by discarding them all and producing the need of the hour with the sincerity of the hour. Every time he has done so he has built not only a monument for his country but for himself.

From which is it to be inferred that we have in America native art in the various branches? Certainly. But not by virtue of foreign example or imitation or importation. Rather in spite of that. There are self-assertive individuals still with us who insist upon seeing, thinking, and working in their own way; and they are carrying on the American tradition of self-reliance. They do not make a large body, but their work has been well received and has met with substantial success. Indeed, the best of American art is very good, and when the imitative part of it is bad it is, I believe, largely

because it is not American. Any expression in art which is but an echo of another art lacks impulse and spontaneity. It cannot be vital nor can it be lasting, though it may have a vogue for a time and be acclaimed in public places. Everything comes out of the soil, even art; and that art which has sprung directly from American soil, though it may have as yet no startling record in the auction-rooms nor silly chatter in the drawing-rooms, is nevertheless good art. And its truth and candor shall some day place it in the ascendant.

But there is no need to lament the limited appreciation of American art. Nor was that my meaning. Rather was it the intention to point out that our foreign importations, and our borrowings from hither and yon, will never produce art with us nor of themselves make us an artistic people. The peacock's feather in the jackdaw's tail did not make him artistic; it made him ridiculous. Our Greek and Roman temples as commercial houses, our French châteaux as city homes, our Rembrandts and Botticellis as drawing-room decoration, our Burgundian tapestries and Persian glass and Louis Quinze chairs as house-

hold furniture are quite as absurd. They are palpable misfits and out of place except, as I have said, in our museums. We admire such things, and not without reason. They are good art, most excellent art, and chiefly because when produced they were native art. What would have been the value of Rembrandt had he been a follower of Raphael, or of Botticelli had he trailed after Jan van Eyck? Had the Egyptians imitated the Assyrians or the modern Persians the Japanese, should we to-day be praising their works and adding them to our collections with such greedy haste? The truth is we admire in the older art and artists the very thing we lack in ourselves—native expression.

We shall not be great in art or its appreciation, nor shall we in anywise become an artistic people, until we put aside our foreign baubles and do our own things, with our own materials, in our own way. We may drag the world for antiquities and turn our house and cities into museums, but in the end we shall find that collecting is one thing and producing quite another thing. Moreover, the inspiration of a nation's art never yet came out of the junk-shop. It comes out of the soil—the time, the

place, the people, and their ideals. Ruskin insisted that the deeds of a nation might be great through good fortune and its words mighty by the genius of a few of its children, but its art only by the general gifts and common sympathies of the race. And his insistence was a right one. We shall have to learn that lesson with its moral of self-reliance before we shall rise to any great heights.

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